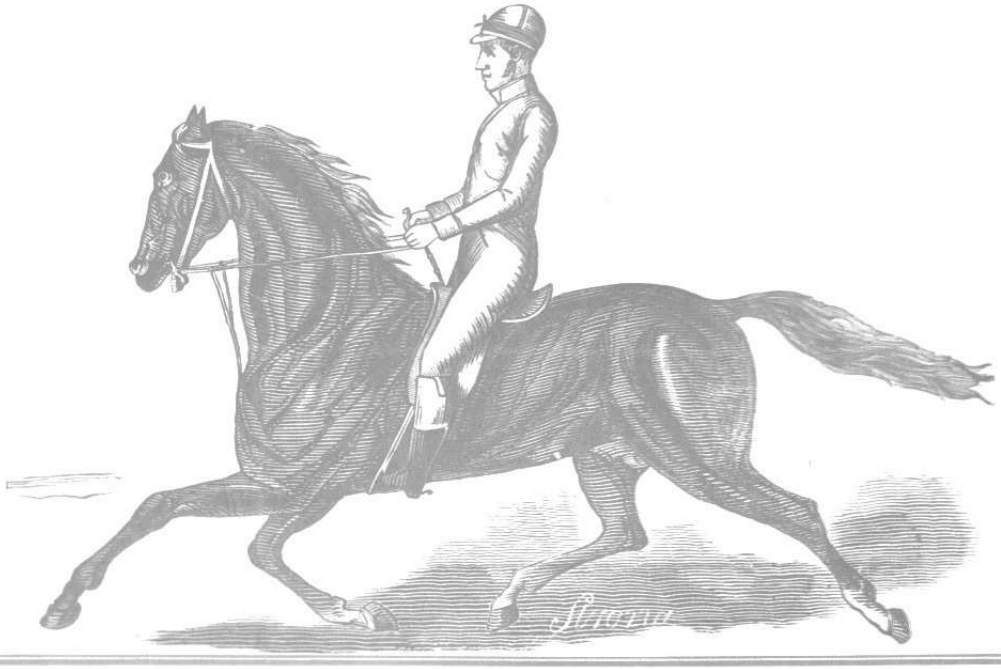
Rysdyk & Hambletonian



HAMBLETONIAN,

WILL STAND FOR A LIMITED NUMBER OF MARES,

At the stable of WM. M. RYSDYK, in Chester, from the first day of April to the first day of August.

$25 THE SEASON, & $35 TO INSURE A MARE WITH FOAL

Season-money due the first day of August next, and insurance-money due on the first day of March, 1856.

PEDIGREE.

HAMBLETONIAN was sired by the celebrated stallion *Abdallah*, and he by *Old Mambrino*, and he by imported *Messenger*. His dam was th *Charles Kent* mare by imported *Bellfounder*, granddam *Old One Eye* [illegible]onian, and he by imported *Messenger*, and his dam also by importe *Messenger*, and the dam of *Old One Eye* was by imported *Messenger* [illegible] years old this spring, nearly 16 hands high, color bright bay, with tw white hind feet. He is confidently believed to be the best and fastest [illegible]tallion in the world of his age. Gentlemen living at a distance an wishing the services of this horse must send in their letters at once, so that I may be ready to receive the mares when they come.

by

Archie J. Manina

Chester, Orange Co., New York, April 4, 1855.

WM. M. RYSDYK.

N. B.--Good Pasture can be obtained for Mares coming from a distance.

Baker, Godwin & Co., Steam Printers, 1 Spruce Street, corner of Nassau, New York.

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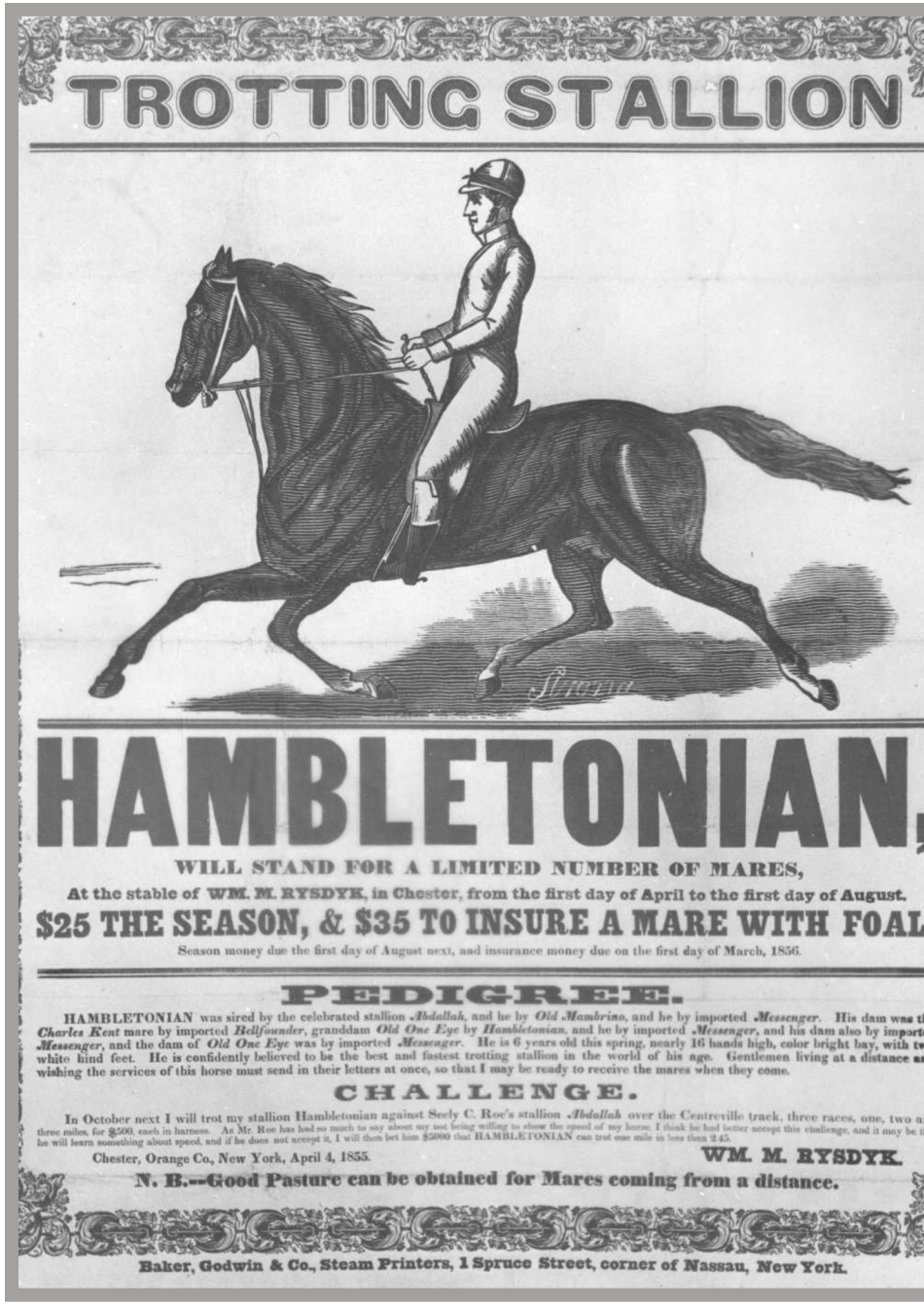

TROTTING STALLION
HAMBLETONIAN,
WILL STAND FOR A LIMITED NUMBER OF MARES,
At the stable of WM. M. RYSDYK, in Chester, from the first day of April to the first day of August.
$25 THE SEASON, & $35 TO INSURE A MARE WITH FOAL
Season money due the first day of August next, and insurance money due on the first day of March, 1856.
PEDIGREE.
HAMBLETONIAN was sired by the celebrated stallion Abdallah, and he by Old Mambrino, and he by imported Messenger. His dam was th
Charles Kent mare by imported Bellfounder, granddam Old One Eye by Hambletonian, and he by imported Messenger, and his dam also by importe
Messenger, and the dam of Old One Eye was by imported Messenger. He is 6 years old this spring, nearly 16 hands high, color bright bay, with tw
white hind feet. He is confidently believed to be the best and fastest trotting stallion in the world of his age. Gentlemen living at a distance an
wishing the services of this horse must send in their letters at once, so that I may be ready to receive the mares when they come.
CHALLENGE.
In October next I will trot my stallion Hambletonian against Seely C. Roe's stallion Abdallah over the Centreville track, three races, one, two a
three miles, for $500, each in harness. As Mr. Roe has had so much to say about my not being willing to show the speed of my horse, I think he had better accept this challenge, and it may be th
he will learn something about speed, and if he does not accept it, I will then bet him $5000 that HAMBLETONIAN can trot one mile in less than 2.45.
Chester, Orange Co., New York, April 4, 1855.
WM. M. RYSDYK.
N. B.--Good Pasture can be obtained for Mares coming from a distance.
Baker, Godwin & Co., Steam Printers, 1 Spruce Street, corner of Nassau, New York.

Reproduction – 1856 stud poster advertising service of William M. Rysdyk stallion, Hambletonian. Courtesy of the Harness Racing Museum.

Dedicated

in memory of

Dr. FredMcNabb, D.V. M.

and

Mr. Gene Whitaker,

the horsemen who introduced me to the

breeding and racing of harness horses.

A.J.M.

Acknowledgments

Without the accounts of those who have come before us, it is not possible to write in a creditable fashion about the past.

This volume never would have been completed without the dedicated work of my Editor, Mrs. Catherin (Stearns) Medich and Mrs. Gail Cunard, Director of the Harness Racing Museum & Hall of Fame. Thank you both.

I am most grateful for the works of John Hervey and John Wallace and to the following authors of valuable resource material: Donald Barrel, James Board, Frank Durland, James Harrison, Marguerite Henry, Dr. S. J. Levy, SamuelParlin, Philip A. Pines and E. M. Ruttenber.

Additionally, the assistance of Mrs. M. A. Booth of the Office of the Orange County Historian; the Orange County Genealogical Society; Julia Pines of the Hall of Fame of the Trotter; Ginna Rickwald and Mrs. Barbara Tully of the Chester Public Library, has been most appreciated.

A final extra special thank you goes to my maternal grandmother, Gracie, for being a Seeley. I take great satisfaction knowing that no matter how distant, I am related to the Seelys, the family whose collective breeding operations produced Rysdyk's Hambletonian.

Introduction

Throughout the ages, scholars have deliberated: Do men make history, or does history make men? Likewise, it has been asserted that many an empire have arisen or fallen due to some insignificant (or so it seemed at the time) incident, the importance of which becomes apparent only long after it has influenced the fortunes of those involved.

Such is the case of the origin and the eventual development of the American Standardbred. Exactly what caused the Thoroughbred, a natural galloper, to become the fountainhead of the modern harness horse remains a mystery. The fact that it did happen and that it happened in an era of expansion across the North American continent is what matters today.

As a newly emerging nation, the United States produced just the right catalyst for the advancement of the road horse. Steady highway improvements, beginning in the early 19th century, helped to change America's primary mode of transportation from the saddle to the wheeled vehicle. Directly, traveling speed became a matter of greater importance to a growing society. The trotting gait lent itself to this type of travel, because it insured a smooth ride at a steady rate of speed for long distances. The galloping horse was not able to run for great distances in harness without becoming exhausted, and the pacer's swaying motion did not furnish a comfortable vehicular ride. The stockmen of the eastern seaboard embarked upon the task of breeding high-class trotting road horses in an effort to meet the demands of the growing populous.

The improvement in the quality of the roads and the horses often brought about spirited brushes, which

temporarily transformed many a farmer into a high lining banshee and his old nag into a Cinderella-like trotting crack. The effects of this phenomenon surfaced everywhere. President Ulysses S. Grant, an ardent follower of trotters, was reported to have been pulled over for speeding on a Washington, D.C. thoroughfare in the late 1860's.[1]

By the middle of the 19th century, America's participation in the Industrial Revolution had spawned a prosperous segment of society, which readily turned to fast trotters as an outlet for its leisure time. Gentlemen organized trotting clubs in the nation's growing cities, primarily along the eastern seaboard, and sanctioned meets were conducted. However, the breeding of speedy trotters for purposes other than just transportation was not yet a paying concern.

In the infant stages of breeding trotting horses, stockmen concentrated on the stallion, rather than the mare. Sires had, and still have, a much greater opportunity to prove themselves in a shorter period of time than their counterparts. These circumstances rapidly led to the popularity of certain stallions and their offspring. Among this number was the stallion Messenger, a Thoroughbred imported from England. Messenger laid the foundation for the Standardbred through his descendant, Hambletonian. Unlike other stallions of his day, Messenger continues to leave his mark on the Standardbred because his descendants have bred on, generation after generation.

Keep in mind that light horses were bred for the road, with beauty and style being revered just as much as speed of foot. Most every racing trotter of the early nineteenth century had initially been bred as a roadster. Their pedigrees did not become important until long after their abilities had been displayed in impromptu contests, which eventually led

to engagements at organized meets. It took a long time to make a trotter, as races for younger horses were nearly unheard of in the nineteenth century.

The times posted by racing trotters began to decrease as each succeeding wave of stock was produced. Multiple heat contests were designed to preserve proof of the trotter's stamina and yet offer the entrants the opportunity to display their speed. The heats were gradually reduced in length until the mile distance became the custom.

As the mid-nineteenth century approached, the sport of trotting was evolving in an organized fashion. Sire lines had been established; quasi-official rules of decorum were observed on the racing course, and the nation as a whole was caught up with the road horse at every turn of daily life. This was the world that Hambletonian entered.

---

[1] Philip Pines: Retired director of the Harness Racing Museum and Hall of Fame and author of the *Complete Book of Harness Racing* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap), p. 246.

The Foaling

When the morning of May 5, 1849 dawned upon the horizon, it was accompanied by the inconspicuous birth of an energetic bright bay colt in a back country pasture of Sugar Loaf, Orange County, lower upstate New York. Bred by an affluent farmer and stockman of English extraction, sired by an old sour-tempered stallion and nurtured by a high-strung crippled mare, the unheralded foal, to be named Hambletonian, was unknowingly about to embark upon a life that would ultimately alter the trotting sport for all time.

The new arrival's owner, Jonas Seely, Jr. was the first to hail his birth.[1] Seely, Jr. was born on the family holdings near Oxford, Town of Chester, Orange County, New York. His father, Jonas Seely, Sr. had been a prosperous farmer and cattle dealer. Seely, Jr. owned several farms, including the Sugar Loaf farm, which he had inherited from his father. He served as a director of the Chester National Bank and several other organizations. Donald Melville Barrel, author and historian, states that Seely, Jr. was particularly well known on the trotting tracks of Long Island and by horsemen everywhere. He was apparently well liked by most everyone who knew him, for all referred to him as "Uncle Jonas". Seely, Jr. died June 1, 1882 at his farm, where he is buried.

The road horse played a dominant role in most of the Seely family's endeavors and they played a major role in the breeding of Hambletonian, particularly in his maternal line. Around 1800, Jonas Seely, Sr. acquired a mare, described as a grand galloper of unknown origin, from a George Dearman (or Deanmand, depending upon whose account you read). The mare was known as Black Jin, Jin Black, or just plain Jin. In 1801, Seely, Sr. sent Black Jin to the stable of Michael Jones in Goshen, where she was mated with the noted

Jonas Seely, Jr. (1797-1882) by photographer A.G. Wheeler, Goshen, New York, c. 1880. Courtesy of the Harness Racing Museum.

imported stallion Messenger. [2] Seely, Sr. came up with a brown filly he named Silvertail. [3]

During the spring of 1814, Seely, Sr. decided to take his Messenger Thoroughbred mare, Silvertail, who had proven to be a great distance galloper, to be bred to the race horse and successful stallion, Bishop's Hambletonian, a son of her own sire. The resulting strongly inbred foal was a temperamental filly who early in life, named herself by losing the sight of an eye in one of her frequent temper tantrums. Subsequently known as One Eye, she was an elegant open-gaited trotter, acknowledged to be one of the best of her day, according to John Hervey[4]. John Wallace[5] always considered One Eye to be the cream of Hambletonian's maternal pedigree. William Rysdyk agreed with Wallace and added that as good as Hambletonian's dam (the Charles Kent Mare) was, One Eye was her superior. One Eye was passed by Seely, Sr. to his son Charles who later sold her to his brother-in-law, Josiah Jackson. As she aged, the mare became known as Old One Eye.

In 1832, Jackson had Old One Eye bred to the imported Norfolk stallion, Bellfounder, who was standing in Orange County. That mating produced a spirited filly that would later be known as the Charles Kent Mare. Jackson sold the filly in 1836 to his brother-in-law, Peter Seely. Peter Seely broke the filly to saddle and trained her on the trot. In 1837, he gave her a public time trial under saddle at Union Course, Long Island in mile heats of 2:43 and 2:41, a wonderful performance for a four year old at the time and the quickest miles ever turned in by a Bellfounder trotter, regardless of age or sex. She was resold a number of times and she was severely injured in a runaway accident and finally ended up in the possession of Charles Kent, a New

York City butcher.

Kent bred her to Webber's Tom Thumb in 1842 and got a brown filly, later named Belle. Failing to conceive in 1843, she was bred back to Tom Thumb in 1844. Knowing she was in foal, Kent decided to sell the aging mare while she was still of value.

One of her former owners, Ebenezer Pray, a New York cattle dealer and business partner of Jonas Seely, Jr., was aware of Kent's desire to sell and informed his associate of the mare's availability. The next time he was in New York City on business, Seely, Jr., accompanied by Pray, journeyed out to Fashion Course on Long Island where the Charles Kent Mare was stabled. Seely, Jr. purchased the old Bellfounder mare and her yearling filly for $135. Some authorities have asserted that he made the purchase for sentimental reason; however, a letter written by Jonas Seely, Jr. to Frank Durland [6] at a later date stated that he bought the pair because he was familiar with the old mare's excellent ancestry.

Seely, Jr. transported the mare and filly home to Sugar Loaf, where the Charles Kent Mare dropped a black colt in 1845.[7] Barren in 1846, the Charles Kent Mare was then sent to Abdallah. Abdallah, foaled in 1823, was a son of American Mambrino, himself a son of Messenger and Amazonia, probably the fastest trotting mare of her day. The Charles Kent Mare foaled a chestnut filly in 1847. Bred back to Abdallah, she produced a brown filly in 1848. During the years the stallion Abdallah stood in Chester (1846-1848), he was managed by Ebenezer Seely, Jonas Seely, Jr.'s brother, with a standard stud fee of $10. Phil Pines discloses that according to the printed record, "Abdallah's personality matched his looks." [8] In spite of the fact that

Field on Jonas Seely, Jr. Farm where Hambletonian was foaled on May 5, 1849. Courtesy of the Harness Racing Museum.

Monument placed on the spot where Hambletonian was foaled, Sugar Loaf, New York. Courtesy of the Harness Racing Museum.

he was a coarse animal and had justly earned his reputation for being ill-tempered, Abdallah was at the same time highly regarded, by many New York breeders, as a sire of extreme trotting speed. The renowned nineteenth century trainer, Hiram Woodroff, asserted that the testy sire's foals, matured early and often exhibited their gameness and ability to win grueling, drawn-out, multiple heat trotting races at advanced ages. [9] John Hervey says that he was the best sire of trotters of his generation, bar none.

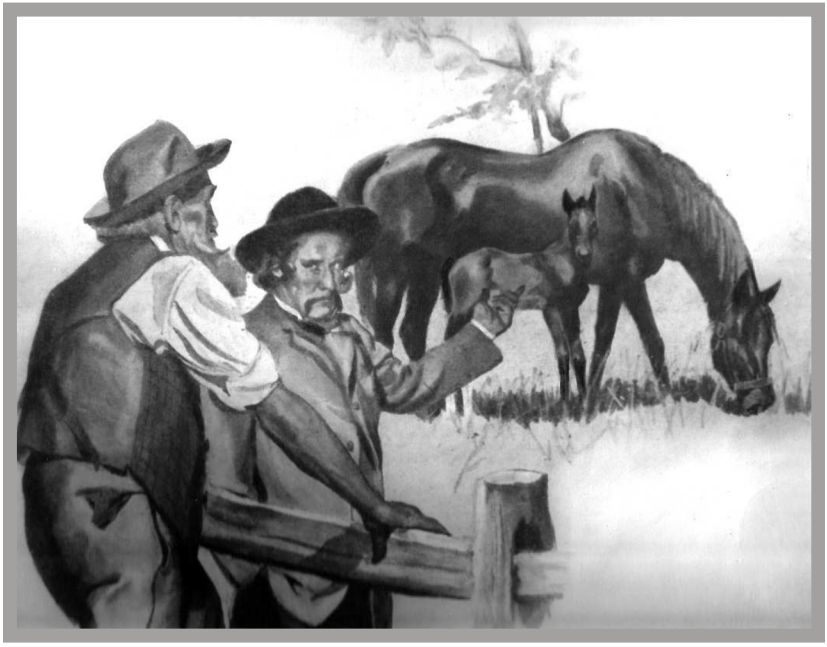
One of the few mares bred to Abdallah the season of 1848, the Charles Kent Mare was due to foal in April of the following year; however, nature failed to cooperate until that May morning in 1849. John Hervey recounts that Jonas Seely, Jr. excitedly summoned his hired man of many years, William "Bill" Rysdyk, to accompany him on his trek to inspect the old Bellfounder mare and her new progeny. Both men, being experienced horsemen, were said to be greatly pleased with what they came upon when they reached the foaling spot under a triad of large oak trees. Seely, Jr. was reported as being ecstatic, while Rysdyk was simply overjoyed by the sight of the vigorous newborn bay colt.

Hervey contended that if there was ever an actual case of love at first sight for a horse, as far as Rysdyk was concerned, this was it. The whole countryside was soon aware of Rysdyk's infatuation, something quite out of character for the tall, hard-working Dutchman.

---

[1] See Appendix I for additional information on the Seely family.
[2] 1801 was Messenger's only season standing in Goshen, where he was well patronized by the horse breeders of the county.
[3] From that same crop, Messenger sired Thoroughbred Miller's Damsel, the "Queen of the Northern Turf" and the future dam of the renowned Thoroughbred American Eclipse. He also got Plato, a full-

brother to Bishop's Hambletonian, and later the sire of the dam of Engineer II, the sire of the "Old Gray Mare," Lady Suffolk.
[4] John Hervey [1869-1947]: Historian and authority on Standardbred and Thoroughbred horses.
[5] John Wallace [1822-1903]: Compiler of first Standardbred registry [1871] and author of equine texts.
[6] Frank Durland: resident of Chester, NY and first hand observer of Hambletonian's Burial.
[7] The colt was later gelded and went on to become a very useful road horse.
[8] Philip A. Pines. The *Complete Book of Harness Racing* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap), p. 91.
[9] Hiram Woodruff, *The American Trotting Horse* (Philadelphia: Porter & Coates, 1867), pp. 72-73.



Jonas Seely and William Rysdyk viewing the colt Hambletonian. Illustration by Artist C.C. Beall, 1949. Courtesy of the Harness Racing Museum.

William Rysdyk:
The Man Behind The Horse

William Mapes Rysdyk was born September 30, 1809 in the Town of Warwick, Orange County, New York. His parents, Garrett Rysdyk and Catherine Mapes Rysdyk, were tenant farmers. [1]

From the days of his earliest childhood, William Rysdyk toiled at repetitious farming chores. E. M. Ruttenber, in his *History of Orange County, New York,* states that early in life, Rysdyk was apprenticed as a farm hand and forced to fend for himself. Dr. S. J. Levy later wrote, "It was his parents' hope that through hard work Rysdyk would some day be able to buy his own land." [2]

Rysdyk, however, seemed destined to spend his life as a hired hand. If he had any other ambitions besides working with horses, only his wife, Mahala Hall Rysdyk, whom he married on March 26, 1829, probably knew them. [3] The union of Mahala and William would be blessed by the births of four children. During the 1830s, William Rysdyk toiled as a farm laborer while he and Mahala tried to raise their children through the strains of economic adversity. Little changed for the family until the death of Mahala Rysdyk on March 3, 1841.

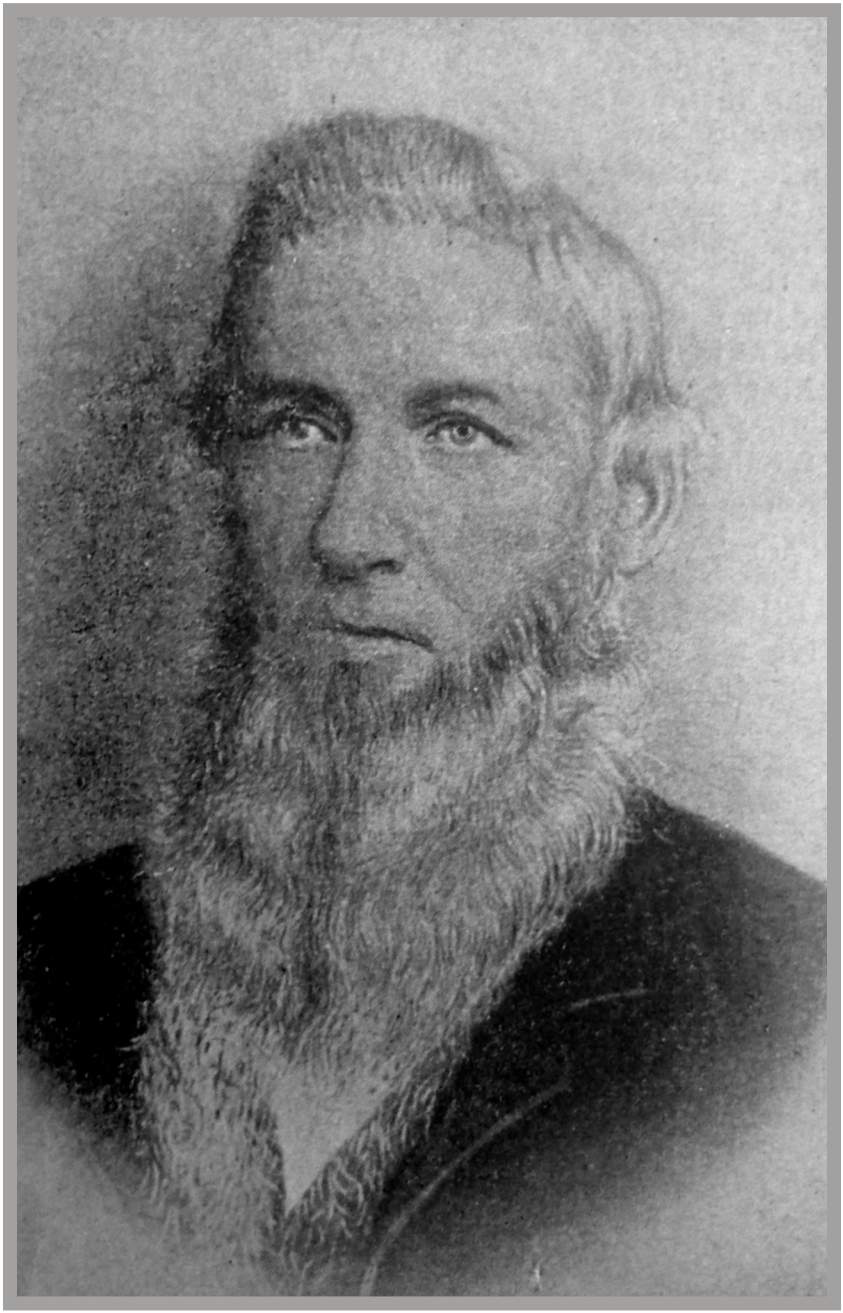
Soon after his wife's passing, Rysdyk moved his three surviving children to the Isaac Townsend Farm on the eastern outskirts of Chester. [4] Custom in the nineteenth century called for an extended period of mourning when a spouse passed away, but as the working father of three young children, William Rysdyk was forced to adopt more immediate action.

Some community disapproval may have been raised

when, on October 6, 1841, just over six months after his wife's death, he married Elvira Sproull. [5] Their union would also give life to four children but each child in turn succumbed to an early death. In all six, of Rysdyk's eight children, died before reaching maturity, and although this was not an uncommon occurrence in an era where disease and illness posed constant threats to human life, such tragedy may have shaped Rysdyk's response to his future success. Necessity had required that William Rysdyk learn self-reliance, economy, and prudence early in life. According to Orange County historian, E. M. Ruttenber, Rysdyk early on earned a lasting reputation for correctness of habit, sociability and frankness of manner. These traits were said to be accompanied by a kind and generous heart. Another Orange County historian, Donald Melville Barrel, added that the angular Dutchman was good natured and respectful.

As is the case with most people, Rysdyk's personality also had a downside. John Hervey and others indicate that Rysdyk did not have a fiery imagination or an excitable nature; however, when he was angered or had reached the point of total frustration, he displayed an explosive temper. He was evidently quick to forgive but not so quick to forget. Once he had made up his mind about something, he would not change it. When he formed an opinion, it became immovable. Stubborn is the correct term to describe him. If William Rysdyk's mind was narrow, it was so because his life had been the same.

Town of Goshen historian, Elizabeth Sharts, described Rysdyk later in life as reserved and stingy when dealing with the owners of mares brought to be bred to Hambletonian. The words "jealous" and "greedy" have been linked to Rysdyk at times and with some justification,



William M. Rysdyk, image from archive news clipping. Courtesy of the Harness Racing Museum.

as his management of Hambletonian will show. However, in his defense, the Orange County trotting stallion owners of the mid-nineteenth century were very competitive, impelled with the instinct to survive and to drive out all others who stood in their way. The owners of the various competing stallions during Hambletonian's time simply acted as surrogates for their horses, seeking to have their animals ascend to the place of prominence in the world of trotting horse breeding managed by man.

Rysdyk fit right into that mind set. He was constantly worried that his horse might miss the chance to be mated with a desirable mare, and without question, numerous people were extremely envious of his position as the owner of Hambletonian. While this behavior may have been tumultuous for the horsemen who were involved, it was just the spark that kept the advancement of the trotting horse moving toward the creation of the Standardbred.

---

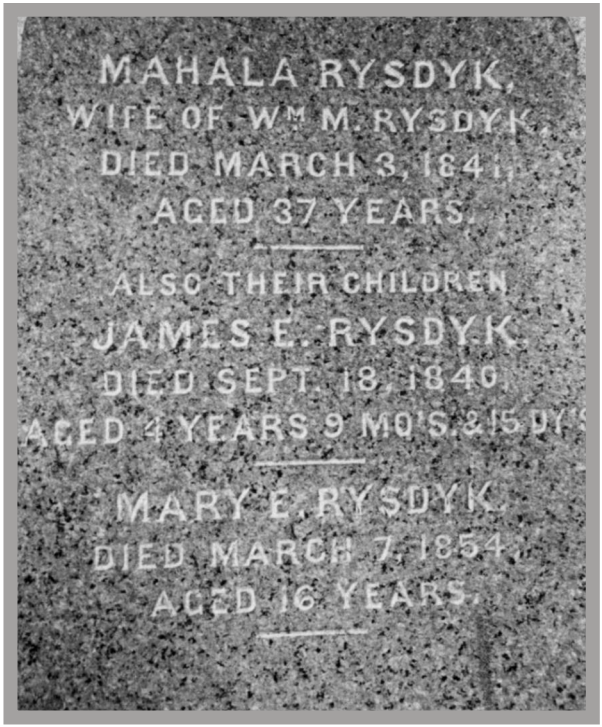
[1]William Mapes Rysdyk was born at what is known as the Noah Gregory farm on the Chester-Florida Road (New York Route 94). Garrett Rysdyk, the descendant of Dutch immigrants, was born in 1770 and died April 14, 1836. Catherine Mapes was two or three years younger than her husband, and the daughter of David Mapes, an innkeeper who operated a tavern on the northern outskirts of Sugar Loaf. Her family's origins were English; they were prominent early settlers of Orange County. In addition to William, the Rysdyks were the parents of a daughter, Jo Anne, and a son, Edward. All three lived into adulthood. When Garrett and Catherine Rysdyk died, they were laid to rest in the Holbert Burying Ground west of Chester, New York, off Route 94.

[2] S. J. Levy. *Chester, N.Y., A History (*Chamber of Commerce, 1947).

[3] Five years his senior, Mahala was also born in Orange County. Throughout her austere lifetime, she was a devoted member of the Presbyterian Church. The couple was to have two of their four children reach adulthood; a son, William T. (1833-1879), a farmer in the Town of

Goshen and a daughter, Elizabeth (1830-1912), later Mrs. David Roe. Mr. Roe (1828-1880) was a merchant in Chester for many years. William never married and Elizabeth had one child, a daughter.
[4] This particular farm contained some of the richest land in the county, with twenty-two of the one hundred-eighty acres consisting of black peat ground, valued, even then, at nearly five hundred dollars per acre.
[5] Elvira, the daughter of Colonel Sproull of Warwick, was born June 26, 1815.

Rysdyk Family Monument: Jackson Community Cemetery, Chester, New York. Photography by Archie Manina.



Rysdyk Family Monument: Mahala Rysdyk wife of Wm. M. Rysdyk, and their children; James E. and Mary E. Rysdyk. Courtesy of Archie Manina.

GEORGE RYSDYK,
DIED SEPT. 13 1846,
AGED 1 YEAR 2 MO'S. & 14 DY'S
ALBERT S. RYSDYK,
DIED OCTOBER 14, 1860,
AGED 9 YEARS 4 MO'S. & 15 DY'S
GEORGE M. RYSDYK,
DIED OCTOBER 17, 1860
AGED 12 YEARS 6 MO'S. & 15 DY'S
JAMES E. RYSDYK, 2ND
DIED JULY 24, 1863,
AGED 20 YEARS & 6 MO'S
CHILDREN OF
WM M. AND ELVIRA RYSDYK

Rysdyk Family Monument: Elvira Rysdyk, second wife of Wm. M. Rysdyk and children George, Albert S., George M., and James E. Rysdyk. Courtesy of Archie Manina.

The Dreams of Youth

Involvement with horses was the only facet of farming that William Rysdyk actually enjoyed. Frank Durland wrote that young Rysdyk had been totally captivated by the elegant roadsters that continuously passed by his home. Thoroughly educated by the school of hard knocks, a staid Rysdyk had very little to look forward to except a life of continued hard work. By early maturity he was known throughout the district as a dependable, stolid laborer, who neither displayed much outward emotion nor indicated that he expected any remarkable change in his future.

As a young man, Rysdyk lived near and, through his mother's family, became acquainted with the Seelys. Jonas Seely, Jr. later engaged him as a farmhand and Rysdyk would make the five-mile journey from Chester to Seely, Jr.'s Sugar Loaf farm on horseback. Donald Melville Barrel wrote that Rysdyk idolized Seely, Jr. and emulated many of his characteristics, the best of which were his abilities to evaluate a horse and manage a farm. [1]

William Rysdyk was fairly accomplished in the saddle and with horses in general by the time he reached adulthood. John Wallace told of his capabilities in a story about being on business for Seely, Jr. in New York City in the early 1830's. Rysdyk paid a visit to Ebenezer Pray, Seely, Jr.'s cattle dealing partner. Pray asked young Rysdyk to try his hand at inducing the first foal of One Eye, Crabstick, to trot. It was Pray's intention to utilize Crabstick as a road horse or hack; however, he had proven to be very unmannerly and would only pace. In that era, pacers were not highly prized for the road.

Buoyantly, Rysdyk agreed to the attempt, but immediately became aware of the fact that the task was going to be much more difficult than he had at first anticipated. That realization was painfully confirmed when he was promptly thrown. Not one to forsake an undertaking, an undaunted Rysdyk remounted and consented to Pray's suggestion of riding the unruly gelding over closely aligned planks. Crabstick now had no other alternative; he either learned to trot or he would go down stumbling in a heap. The recalcitrant horse responded and, after a while, was content to trot without the inducement of the planks. This incident underscores Rysdyk's reputation for tenacity and fortitude, while attesting to his competence as a rider.

Frank Durland states that William Rysdyk had always longed to escape the monotony of farm labor, and apparently his dream intensified as he reached middle age. He became thoroughly convinced that breeding trotters was the only way that he could advance his standing in life. A part of the Hambletonian legend has always been that Rysdyk was an ignorant farm hand who just happened to latch onto the great progenitor through blind luck. He is often portrayed as being too simple to actually realize how fortunate he had been; however many facts exist that shed a completely different light upon his pre-Hambletonian horse-related activities.

A number of events recorded by John Wallace clearly indicate that Rysdyk was associated with trotting-bred horses long before his 1849 purchase of Hambletonian. The first of these incidents deals with the breeding of the Charles Kent Mare. Jonas Seely, Jr. informed Wallace by letter that his brother-in-law, Josiah Jackson, had bred Old One Eye to Bellfounder in 1831 at Poughkeepsie, or wherever he stood

that year; others, including Rysdyk, were sure that the actual year was 1832, when Bellfounder was at Washingtonville, a village six miles northeast of Chester. Wallace states that William Rysdyk knew Bellfounder well and always admired the characteristics that he passed on through his daughter, the Charles Kent Mare, to Hambletonian. Wallace further adds that through his employment of many years, Rysdyk was on intimate terms with the Seelys and was knowledgeable of their business affairs, placing him in a position to make such an assertion. These facts, coupled with previously cited incidents, serve as indicators of Rysdyk's knowledge of and attraction to fast trotters by the early 1830s.

Rysdyk's awareness of early Orange County racehorses is recorded by John Wallace. Rysdyk was a source of information for Wallace on a stallion named Engineer, who stood at Goshen in 1846. [2] Another example of the respect that other horsemen had for Rysdyk's expertise in the area of trotting horse ancestry can be seen by the fact that when Charles Dole purchased Enchantress, the future dam of Harold and Lakeland Abdallah, he enlisted Rysdyk's assistance in tracing her origins and was more than satisfied with his findings. The pedigree listed the mare's second dam was by Bellfounder. Although it was later disregarded by Wallace for what he considered a lack of positive proof, other knowledgeable horsemen of the day accepted it as correct.

These collective bits of information indicate that Rysdyk was not the dullard that many writers have pictured him as being in previous historical renditions. Due to the limited nature of our historical record and the manner in which Rysdyk conducted certain aspects of his breeding

operations in later years, it is understandable why many of the early chroniclers of the sport considered William Rysdyk to be uncouth. His critics, however, chose to overlook the size and success of Rysdyk's breeding farm operations became after the purchase of Hambletonian. William M. Rysdyk was an experienced and skilled horseman and having made a number of trips to New York City over the years, he was well aware of the world around him.

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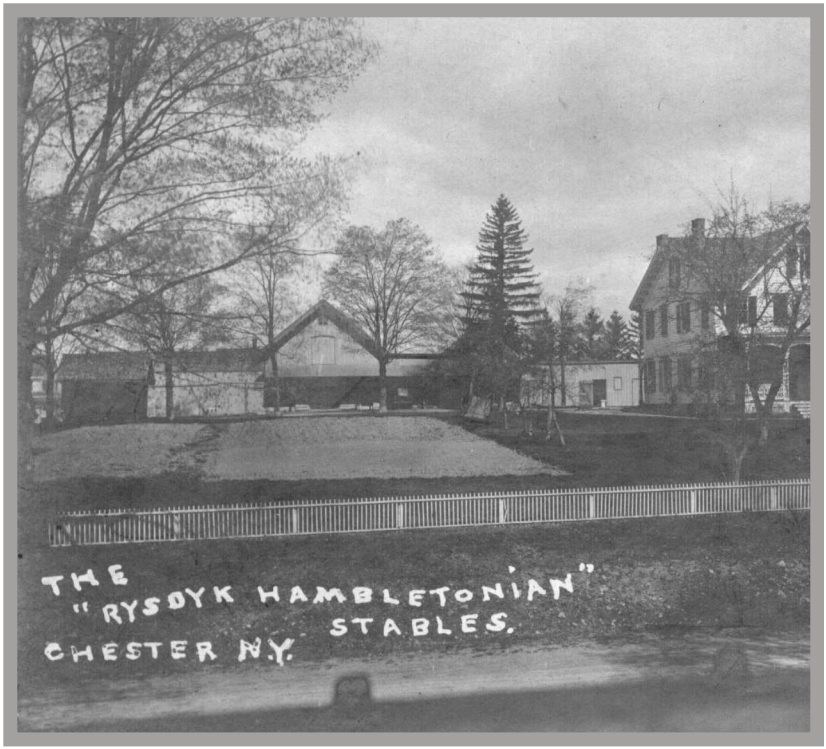
[1] Donald Melville Barrel: *Along the Waywayanda Path.* (Middletown, NY: T. Emmet Henderson, 1975). p. 11.
[2] John H. Wallace "Early Horse History of Orange County," *Wallace's Monthly* (May 1876). p. 750.



Home and stables of William M. Rysdyk, Chester, NY. Courtesy of the Harness Racing Museum.

The Decision of a Lifetime

According to John Hervey, Rysdyk was so impressed by the Charles Kent Mare's colt that he soon became concerned that someone else would come along to purchase him; for Jonas Seely, Jr. had a solid reputation as a horse breeder throughout the region. Rysdyk was well aware of the fact that prospective buyers often dropped by to see what Seely might have for sale or trade. Shortly after foaling, the Charles Kent Mare was taken to nearby Florida, New York and bred to Young Patriot. By this time, Hervey states, the Abdallah colt had become an obsession with the Dutchman. Rysdyk finally decided that he had to make an offer for the bay colt himself.

Hervey goes on to say that when the time seemed right, Rysdyk approached his employer about putting a monetary value on the colt. Rysdyk was somewhat taken aback by Seely, Jr.'s insistence that he would only sell the colt if his dam was part of the arrangement for $150. A disappointed William Rysdyk had apparently been prepared to go as high as $100 for the suckling, but he had not figured on the additional expense of the mare being included. [1]

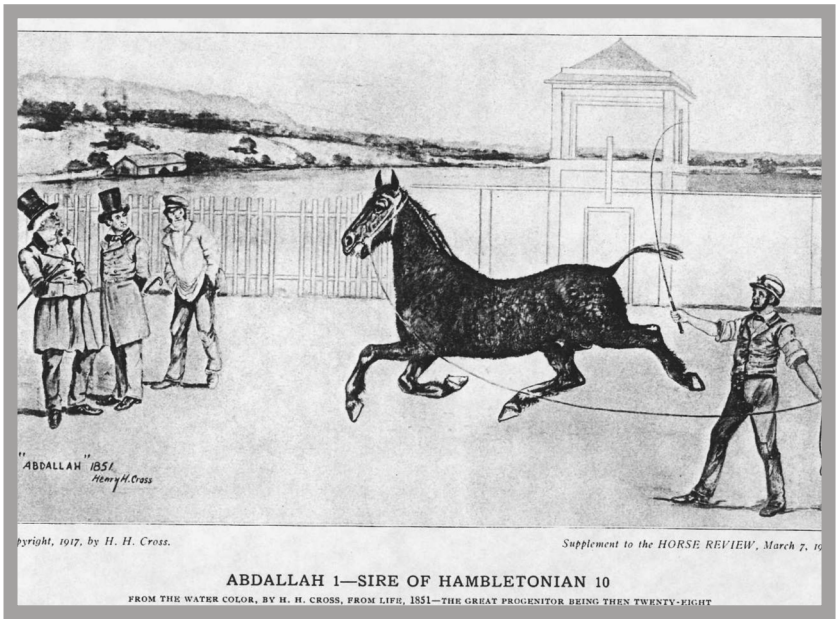
Most assuredly, Rysdyk did not have that kind of capital, yet he was not about to give up that easily either. After Rysdyk explained his financial predicament, Seely, Jr. decided to reduce the price to $125. Even then, rather than make a reckless judgement, Hervey says Rysdyk decided that he needed to think the matter over. He asked Seely, Jr. if he would wait until the next morning for an answer. William Rysdyk was positive that he wanted the colt, but raising the extra $25 to complete the deal surely posed an unforeseen problem. Obviously Seely, Jr. was aware of Rysdyk's

passion, and from all available indications wanted him to have the mare and colt. However, he had lowered the price all that he felt he could. Rysdyk clearly had a lot to think about on his way home that evening.

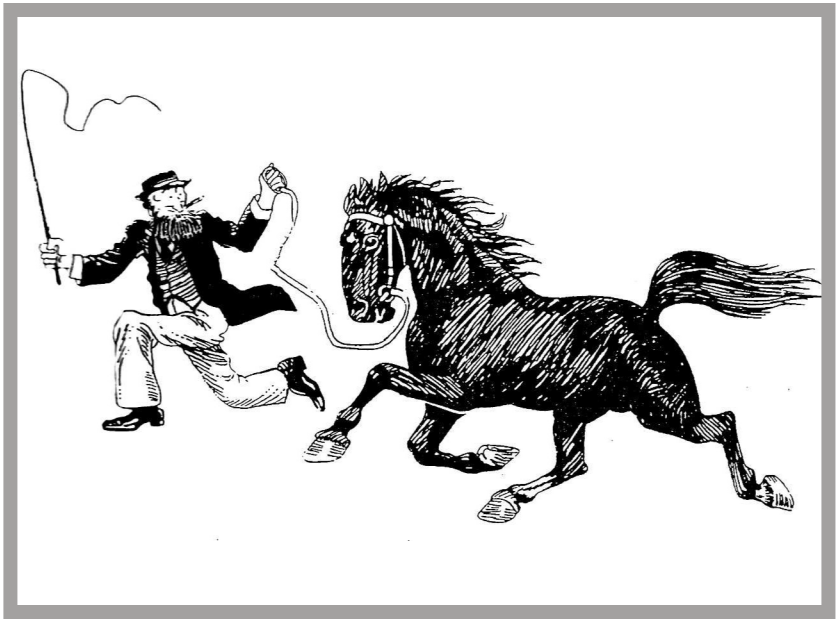
Since no actual record of what Rysdyk thought about before committing himself to the purchase of the mare and colt exists, we can only surmise what he might have contemplated. Being familiar with both the sire and the dam of the young colt, he would likely have mulled over some of the following facts.

Even though Abdallah was long in the tooth (26) and not aging gracefully, he was acknowledged as being one of, if not the most, dominant sires of superior road horses and extreme speed in the United States at the time. During a period when distance races of multiple heats were conducted under saddle and to wagon over bad tracks of questionable measurements, the stallion most noted for siring numerous winners and fast trotters was Abdallah. In the years prior to the foaling of Hambletonian in 1849, Abdallah had to his credit many well thought of trotters, including Lady Blanche, Lady Spot, Ajax, Hector, Medoc, and Brooklyn Maid.

A few years ago, Charlie Leershen wrote that while people of the time differed only over whether Abdallah was meaner or uglier, very few breeders questioned his potency as a trotting sire. Rysdyk, through his association with Seely, Jr. and his family, knew Abdallah well and was aware of his appearance, disposition and reputation for production. He undoubtedly was involved in the actual breeding process of Seely, Jr.'s mares. Rysdyk would have realized he was not buying a clone of Abdallah, but rather a son of his, one whose makeup had been modified in part by the Bellfounder


"ABDALLAH" 1851
Henry H. Cross
pyright, 1917, by H. H. Cross.
Supplement to the HORSE REVIEW, March 7, 1
ABDALLAH 1—SIRE OF HAMBLETONIAN 10
FROM THE WATER COLOR, BY H. H. CROSS, FROM LIFE, 1851—THE GREAT PROGENITOR BEING THEN TWENTY-EIGHT

Abdallah Isire of Hambletonian 10. From watercolor by Henry H. Cross, 1851. Supplement to the Horse Review, March 7, 1917. Courtesy of the Harness Racing Museum.



Rysdyk & Hambletonian, adapted by Archie Manina from a drawing by Robert Dickey, 1924. Courtesy of Archie Manina.

mare whom he had been extremely fond of long before.

Hervey and Wallace both stated that Rysdyk was fully acquainted with and full of praise for Bellfounder, a horse that he had often observed trotting with his groom, Obed, on his back. Bellfounder's conformation and disposition have been reported as being just the opposite of Abdallah's. [2] The fact that Bellfounder was an imported Norfolk Trotter, a breed renowned for its trotting instinct, coupled with his own individualism, caused Rysdyk to hold him in great esteem. Additionally, the Charles Kent Mare was known to be Bellfounder's fastest trotter and without doubt his best bred daughter. During the age when she was foaled (1833), quite often a roadster's known maternal lines ended with the dam, due to the fact that most of their pedigrees were unrecorded or untraced. Consequently, a mare's genetic contributions to a mating were judged not to be as important as those of the stallion.

For the most part, the individual characteristics of the sire and dam were considered far more important than their ancestry. Obviously, a stallion has the opportunity to produce many more offspring in a given year than a mare, so breeders tended to place more emphasis on the importance of the sire. Broodmares were selected primarily because of their road performance and not so much for their pedigrees. Horses were frequently traded from one locale to another, the result being that the details of their backgrounds were often lost or unlikely to be believed by the purchaser.

The history of the Charles Kent Mare was a lot different. Rysdyk personally knew her breeder and the lineage of her maternal family. In her case, that lineage was recognized as one of the best. Looking back from today's vantage point, it is quite evident that Hambletonian was an

extremely well bred colt. William Rysdyk was surely aware of that fact as well. Additionally, he witnessed the ever-increasing demand for quality road horses by city dwellers. Rysdyk understood that Orange County was an important breeding center that could easily supply him with enough mares to support a stallion of the type he hoped to develop.

Plenty of Chester residents thought that it was quite peculiar for Rysdyk to be so preoccupied with, what appeared to them, just another horse. He knew the difference. The Dutchman was positive he wanted that particular colt. Finding the extra money needed to complete the deal was his sole concern.

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[1] $100 was a high price for any suckling at that time. Stakes races were rare, and race horses took years to develop. Big prices were paid for proven performers, not young colts who could be struck down at any moment by disease or injury.

[2] John Hervey. *The American Trotter* (New York: Coward-McCann, 1947). John H. Wallace, *The Horse of America* (New York: John H. Wallace, 1897).

The Dream Materializes

When Rysdyk returned to the Seely farm the next day, Hervey tells us he had unalterably made up his mind to buy the pair; however, he did ask to be allowed additional time to come up with the full purchase price. Jonas Seely, Jr. agreeably consented. The transaction was completed in October of 1849. After a time, the Charles Kent Mare proved to be in foal to Young Patriot. This made the deal that much more palatable to the aspiring stockman.

Jonas Seely, Jr. was also satisfied, for he knew that the old mare and her colt were in reputable hands, and he had at the same time managed to cash two additional horses out of his operation. The Charles Kent Mare was getting on in years, and he had no need for a stallion. Seely, Jr. still owned Belle, the Charles Kent Mare's initial foal, who had recently produced her second foal, also by Abdallah; and the full sisters to the Abdallah colt were likewise his property (although both died before reaching the age of four).

Immediately after Rysdyk got the pair home, he began to halter break the dynamic colt. Displaying the extraordinary intelligence and docility that was to become a lifelong trademark, the future foundation sire seemed to crave the attention that his owner lavished upon him. Hervey and Wallace both reported that Rysdyk could not do enough for the colt, and the youngster responded in kind.

After separating him from his mother, the Dutchman treated his prize like royalty and the fledgling wanted for nothing. Donald Melville Barrel wrote that Rysdyk was so elated with his charge's progress that he splurged, purchasing a white bridle, girth, and martingale with which to accentuate the weanling's debut at the Orange County Fair

of October, 1849 in nearby Goshen at the (third of a mile) Historic Track. [1] The Charles Kent Mare's spring foal made an instant hit with the fairgoers, all agreeing that he was a wonderful sight as he majestically strutted about. He rapidly became one of the features of the fair; for who doesn't appreciate a well-mannered colt?

The son of old Abdallah kept growing and learning all through 1850. When fair time came around he once again was all the rage, being selected the best Orange County yearling exhibited that fall. Rysdyk was all aglow, for his fondest dreams were beginning to materialize.

Guy Miller [2] reported that in early 1851, Rysdyk began working the big colt in the bitting harness and leading him daily beside his old pacer, further testimony of Rysdyk's skill as a horseman. [3] All through the green spring and the hot summer of that year, the lessons continued. The entire Chester community was now aware of the marvelous two year old's activities, for Rysdyk constantly paraded him about. Many local inhabitants began to recognize in him what Rysdyk had seen all along.

Phil Pines passes along a tale from the legend of Hambletonian. [4] In the spring or summer of 1851, when the colt was two, Rysdyk found himself in great need of capital, for what reason or purpose is not known. According to the story, he held an auction at his home, and included the two year old in the sale. He hoped to raise $2,000 by selling Hambletonian; however, no bidder approached his reserve price.

All other historical accounts lead us to believe that the last thing that Rysdyk would ever do was sell his prize colt, so if the fable is true, he must have really been pressed for money. Rysdyk apparently solved his dilemma in some

other fashion, for never again was Hambletonian offered for sale at any price.

In the family history passed to William Sanford Durland, Sr. by his father, Frank Durland, and to him by his grandfather, James S. Board, we are told that in the fall of 1851, at the age of two, Hambletonian resembled a fully developed horse, much advanced for his age, both in behavior and physical form. [5] As both a proud owner and a clever showman, Rysdyk decided to add to the colt's reputation by mating him to a few mares in the fall of 1851. Among the gentlemen taken with the Abdallah colt was Lewis J. Sutton of the Town of Warwick, New York. Sutton had been very impressed by the youngster when he had observed him being led beside another horse at the county fair, where he again emerged as best stallion for his age. When Sutton became aware of the fact that the juvenile was being allowed to cover a number of mares without charge, he quickly asked for the privilege of booking his excellent little trotting mare, Katy Darling, to him.

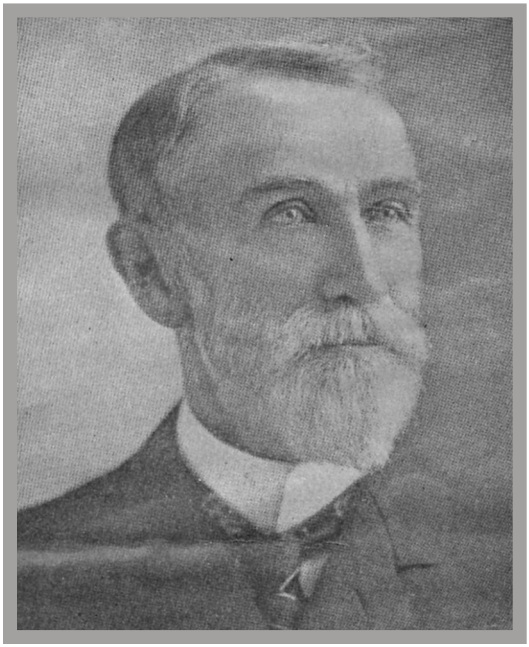
The two year old served four mares that fall. Three of the mares subsequently produced foals, a filly and two colts. One of the colts was called the Mape's Colt and the other colt, Katy Darling's bay son, was the *Immortal* Alexander's Abdallah 15, the eventual sire of the grandest trotter of the time, Goldsmith Maid 2:14m (1857-1885) Jubilant over his colt's reception, Rysdyk made a monumental decision: he intended to henceforth devote his interests entirely to the breeding of fast road horses and the tilling of the Townsend farm.

Early in 1852, the young stallion was named Hambletonian, presumably after one of his ancestors, the noted racehorse sire, Bishop's Hambletonian (1804-1834).

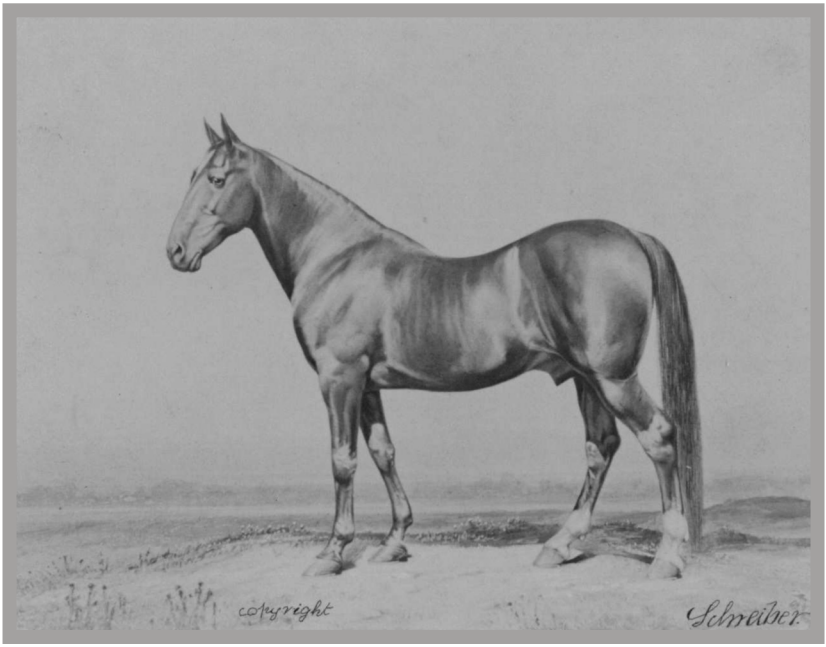
Hambletonian's speed at the trot soon increased to the point that Rysdyk's old pacer could no longer sprint fast enough for the colt. As his owner had hoped, Hambletonian in time acquired a sizable following of admirers, and as might be expected, a number of boisterous critics also emerged. Most of the latter group were supporters of another Chester-based son of Abdallah, who was a year older than Rysdyk's colt, named Abdallah Chief; he was bred by Jonathan Wood of Warwick, New York and owned by Seely C. Roe, a relative of the Seely family who lived on the road to Craigville. The large (sixteen hands) chestnut was making his initial season at $25. William Rysdyk had also settled upon that figure for Hambletonian's first full year of duty.

Before long, the merits of the two stallions were being tossed back and forth throughout the community, intensifying the rivalry between the two opposing camps. The charge was advanced that Hambletonian was a show horse, not a real trotter like Abdallah Chief, whom Roe often drove in harness. Rysdyk answered that accusation by promptly breaking the colt to harness. He began driving him regularly on the roads around Chester. Hambletonian is said to have warmed to the task eagerly. During the exchange, Hambletonian stood at stud and covered seventeen mares of which thirteen eventually foaled.

All of these early foals were bred for road purposes, not for racing. From this specific crop, one foal in particular offers an interesting study of breeding practices of the time. Jonas Seely, Jr. brought his broodmare Belle, Hambletonian's own half-sister by Weber's Tom Thumb, to be mated with the young progenitor. The resulting foal was a filly that was later sold and taken west by Joseph A. Green of Muscatine, Iowa. Green reported that she eventually developed a high



Guy Miller, news clipping photograph. Courtesy of the Harness Racing Museum.



Hambletonian 10, Schreiber & Sons photograph. Courtesy of the Harness Racing Museum.

rate of trotting speed. This filly is a sterling example of the close inbreeding which was often practiced by breeders during the developmental stages of the Standardbred. Feeling that it was time for Hambletonian to be exposed to a larger number of prospective patrons, Rysdyk decided to exhibit him at the Great Fair of the American Institute to be held in mid-October of 1852 in New York City. When Roe subsequently decided to show Abdallah Chief at the institute, it was only natural that a match on one of the mile tracks of Long Island would result.

Historian Barrel stated Roe had tried many times to arrange a race with Rysdyk. Roe reportedly went so far as to insinuate that Rysdyk was afraid to meet him. The horses were trained for a few short weeks and then shipped to Castle Gardens, located on the tip of Manhattan, for the exhibition. At the fair, the young stallions were overshadowed by the daily showing of the first American submarine boat, and the pages of the *New York Daily News* were filled with the illness and the eventual passing of the great American orator, Daniel Webster during the same fortnight.

The match was set for late October at Union Course near Jamaica on Long Island, New York. The horses were to draw wagons one mile, separately; the owners to drive. Roe was confident about Abdallah Chief's chances, whereas John Hervey asserts that Rysdyk was apprehensive, for both his and the colt's futures depended heavily upon the outcome of the contest. [6] He was as positive as ever about Hambletonian's ability, but fate had dealt him many an unexpected disappointment in the past, and he had learned that it did not pay to rely solely on hopes and dreams.

[1] Donald Melville Barrel: *Along the Waywayanda Path.* (Middletown, NY: T. Emmet Henderson, 1975), p. 11.

[2] Hambletonian's groom from 1854-1857. Guy Miller became a prominent horseman in his own right.

[3] John Hervey. *The American Trotter* (New York: Coward-McCann, 1947), p. 24

[4] Evelyn Slobody, Lawrence Slobody and Philip A. Pines, *Currier & Ives Presents Trotting: The National Pastime of Early America: A Pageant of Horse Prints from 1840-1895*, (Peekskill, NY: Benson Press, 1984).

[5] Dr. Samuel J. Levy, *Chester, NY, A History* (Chester, N.Y.: Chamber of Commerce, 1947), p. 72.

[6] John Hervey, *The American Trotter* (New York: Coward-McCann, 1947), p. 69.

The Public Trial

At the appointed hour, "the horses, their skeleton wagons rattling behind them, moved out onto the raceway." [1] Hambletonian rather easily beat Abdallah Chief's time when he trotted a mile in 3:03. William Rysdyk was elated and prouder than ever of his colt, if that was possible. John Wallace wrote that Seely C. Roe was very much surprised by the outcome, for he had trained Abdallah Chief in faster time prior to the match. In a short while, Roe gave his horse another trial, Abdallah Chief clipping over the course in 2:55 ½. The results of the second exhibition seemed to reassure his followers that the match had been a fluke.

Once again the shadow of doubt was cast upon the colt's reputation. Within a day or two, a much more confident William Rysdyk drove Hambletonian a solo mile in 2:48 to wagon. When the trial was completed, Rysdyk was more sure than ever that he owned the best young trotting stallion in America. Now almost everyone else knew what he had proclaimed all along: Hambletonian was something extra special.

The light, systematic conditioning for the match trial was the only formal training that Hambletonian ever got, for Rysdyk felt that he had proven once and for all that his horse not only had a pedigree and style, but that he was now a trotter of demonstrated ability. Although 2:48 does not seem like much of a mile today, it was an unheard of effort for a colt of that era. Rarely was a three-year-old trained extensively, let alone matched, in a public performance. At that time, the general feeling was that early development led to early decay and that if a stallion was used hard on the

Black Hawk and Jenny Lind over the Union Course, L.I., New York, November 17,1847. Lithograph by Currier & Ives, 1850. Courtesy of the Harness Racing Museum.

Hambletonian's Skeleton Wagon on display at the Harness Racing Museum & Hall of Fame. Courtesy of the Harness Racing Museum.

track, his virility would be sapped. Consequently, few, if any, records are available documenting similar appearances by other young horses.

In an example of an unusual race for three year olds, which took place in 1828 at Hunting Park in Philadelphia, the field competed under saddle and toured the oval in 3:04. Speaking of Hambletonian, John Wallace concluded that few, if any, three year olds at all had ever reached that mark in training, and certainly none had done so on the track. At about the same time as the Abdallah Chief-Hambletonian clash was taking place, a Morgan-bred three-year-old named Ethan Allen (eventual record, 2:25¼) was defeating a collection of trotting colts at the Clinton, New York fairgrounds over a very poor half-mile track in a rare stake race. The son of Vermont Black Hawk won in straight heats of 3:20, 3:21, considered to be excellent time for his age, in spite of the track conditions. Racing at the time was waged by mature horses who were given years of preparation. The biggest names in trotting up to that time had been chiefly geldings, with the exception of the wonderful mare Lady Suffolk, who trotted a mile in 2:29½ in 1845. Of the half-dozen horses that had ever shown 2:30 capabilities in public, other than Lady Suffolk, only Pelham, with a record of 2:28 trotted in 1849 which made him the record holder of the day, Moscow and Lady Sutton had ever trotted winning heats in that time. For many years after Hambletonian's trial, a horse capable of trotting in 2:40 on a track or 3:00 on the road was considered extraordinary.

The first documented mile ever trotted by a three year old inside of 2:40 was turned in by Elvira Whiteside when she stopped the clock in 2:39 at Lexington, Kentucky in the fall of 1860. Not until 1861 did Daniel Lambert, a son

of Ethan Allen, register what was recognized as the world record for three year old colts when he trotted a mile in 2:42. He was hitched to a sulky, while Hambletonian had pulled a wagon during his trial nine years earlier. For a number of years thereafter, the three year old stallion record lagged behind the filly mark. Incidentally, the first mile ever to beat 2:40 trotting in Orange County did not come along until Widow Machree, then called Mary Hoyt, circled the newly reconstructed Goshen half-mile track in 2:36½ in 1858, six years after Hambletonian's trial.

These facts, when coupled with the knowledge that Hambletonian had only been tutored for a few weeks and had towed a high-wheeled, cumbersome wagon around flat turns, driven by his owner, who although very capable, was by no means a professional in any sense of the word, makes the time turned in by the colt for his trial mile even that much more impressive.

The pleasant days of October were gone now; Roe was no longer interested in further encounters, and Rysdyk was longing for the rich rolling hills of Orange County and his family. Both men decided that it was time to pack up and ship home. Hambletonian's trip to New York City was the only time that he is ever known to have been out of the borders of Orange County. Flush with their victory, Rysdyk and Hambletonian returned to Chester in a blaze of glory and admiration. [2]

It would seem that the happenings at Union Course would have buried the controversy that existed between the two Chester stallions once and for all; however, just as soon as the trial was over, there were those who maintained that the posted time was a fabrication. One faction called it a "put up job" designed just "to make Rysdyk feel good." [3]

The group was headed by a man John Wallace identified only as "J. M." of Orange County, a man known by the entire countryside for his vehement dislike of William Rysdyk.

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[1] Philip A. Pines, *The Revised Complete Book of Harness Racing,* 2nd ed. (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1973), p. 94.
[2] S. J. Levy, *Chester, NY, A History* (Chester N.Y.: Chamber of Commerce), p. 68.
[3] John H. Wallace, *The Horse of America.* (New York: John Wallace, 1897). pp. 270-271.

Lingering Shadows

The rumors that the Union Course times were fabricated continued to circulate for years in spite of the fact that on numerous occasions, even Seely C. Roe had stated that the time was correct as given. John Wallace wrote that the day after Seely C. Roe returned to Chester from his stay on Long Island, he went to visit with his brother-in-law, David R. Feagles. According to Feagles, Roe stated, "Rysdyk's colt trotted the Union Course in 2:48. I held my watch on him and I know it is true." [1] Wallace also states that Jonathan H. Wood, the breeder of Abdallah Chief, often related that Roe had told him the same account of the happenings and that he always repeated the same story when quizzed by someone who disputed the facts. [2]

When it is taken into consideration that Roe would benefit most if the time could be proven to be inaccurate, he certainly had no reason to enhance such a falsehood, for he stood Abdallah Chief. Hervey sums up the affair by saying that the informal jury, composed of Orange County breeders, decided for themselves which version of the story they believed by, breeding 101 mares to Hambletonian in 1853.

A final point of interest concerning this incident is the fact that William Rysdyk always gave the time as 2:48½ in the horse's stud ads over the ensuing years. It was well known by the community that Rysdyk was remarkably careful about what he said concerning the affair. He always made a practice of aiming well within the truth when referring to the time trial. He continuously gave the time at 2:48½ because some of the spectators' watches may have caught the colt in that time, even though most of those

Trotting stallions Young Woful and Abdallah Chief over the Fashion Course, L.I., New York, November 4, 1865. Lithograph by Currier & Ives, 1866. Courtesy of the Harness Racing Museum.

VOLUNTEER.
THE GREAT SIRE OF TROTTERS.
Foaled 1854; by Rysdyk's Hambletonian, dam Lady Patriot by Young Patriot.
Volunteer sired St Julien 2:12¾, Gloster 2:17, Alley 2:19, Bodine 2:19¾, Amy, Driver, Huntress,
Powers, and many other of the fastest trotters that have appeared on the turf and the road.

Volunteer foaled 1854, by Rysdyk's Hambletonian, dam Lady Patriot. Lithograph by Currier & Ives, 1880. Courtesy of the Harness Racing Museum.

present timed the mile in 2:48 even.[3]

Hambletonian's career was now headlong in motion, and from the 101 mares covered in 1853, 78 foals resulted in 1854. Future standard record sires, Volunteer and Gage's Logan, were members of that crop, as was Shark 2:27¾ (under saddle). In 1854, seventeen-year-old Guy Miller of Elmira, New York went to work for William Rysdyk. For the next three years, he groomed and handled the young stallion. Miller broke him to saddle that same year and often gave him his daily exercise by that means, as well as frequently driving him. [4] Sometime later, Rysdyk's wife Elvira, was shocked to learn that he had turned down an offer, reported to be $10,000 one place and $20,000 in another, for Hambletonian. He confidently felt that the horse could earn much more than that as a stallion; besides, how could he sell his lifelong dream?

For some reason, the Hambletonian—Abdallah Chief controversy erupted again in early 1855. It was squelched only when Rysdyk issued a challenge to Roe. Rysdyk offered to match his horse against Abdallah Chief or time in an effort to prove that Hambletonian was a trotter capable of speed. Even though Abdallah Chief was being readied for a racing campaign, the challenge went unanswered by Roe, and the affair was soon forgotten.

With the Abdallah Chief matter closed, Rysdyk expanded his operation by purchasing Sir Walter, a gelded trotter of local reputation due to his victory in a series of ice races over another local heroine, the Curry Abdallah Mare. Rysdyk's interest in the horse centered around the fact that he was an 1848 foal of Abdallah, out of Jesse Roe's mare, who was by Jonas King's Bellfounder, a son of Bellfounder. The Curry Abdallah Mare was also by Abdallah and out of a

mare by imported Bellfounder. It is readily apparent that both horses were bred along the same lines as Hambletonian. Rysdyk paid $600 for the gelding and then sent him to Warren Peabody. Peabody was a well known trainer on Long Island, whose stable over the years included Lady Jane (2:30), Chicago Jack (2:30), and Grey Eagle (2:31). He had obviously purchased the horse in an effort to promote the racing capabilities of the Abdallah Bellfounder cross that Hambletonian possessed. Sir Walter was trained in 2:32 and then sent home to Chester. Upon the gelding's return, Rysdyk often drove his pair of Abdallahs in double harness. It was well known by those who resided in the area that, even though the stallion was not extensively trained and in stud condition, he was able to out trot Sir Walter for the first half-mile when the duo was let out by their owner. The gelding was later sold for $3,000 and eventually took a record of 2:27 in harness.

During this same time period, Rysdyk bought Plato, a son of Long Island Black Hawk out of the Welling Mare, as a companion stallion for Hambletonian. Over the years, William Rysdyk added other stallions, including Almack, by Hambletonian and Rysdyk's Bellfounder, whom he paid $4,200 for as a two year old. This son of Hambletonian, as might be suspected, was out of Milkmaid by the Bellfounder line stallion, Friday.

A tenant farmer, until this time, Rysdyk was able to purchase the farm that he had rented for almost twenty-five years with the stud fees that were coming in droves from all over. Breeding season after season came and went, and each year more and more of Hambletonian's offspring dotted the countryside and ultimately spread to almost every region of the nation.

Elizabeth Sharts reported that in 1855, the Orange County Fair Board decided to alternate its exhibition between the outlying communities of the county and Goshen. This meant that fair racing would only be conducted at the trotting park every other year. Alarmed that trotting and horse shows would lose exposure, the Orange County Society for the Improvement of Horses was established in 1856. William M. Rysdyk was elected as a director. Always the showman, Rysdyk knew participation in the annual exhibitions of the Society guaranteed Hambletonian continued exposure to the breeders of the county.

A switch in caretakers was made necessary in 1857 when Guy Miller decided to start his own breeding establishment. Over the ensuing years, Miller was often to board mares that were sent to be bred to Hambletonian. He also stood a number of Hambletonian's sons and bred many of his own mares to his former charge. Miller and Rysdyk remained friends and associates for the remainder of the latter's life. A local man named Harmon Showers, who was of African and Iroquois Indian decent, came to work for Rysdyk and continued to watch over the stallion for the rest of the great progenitor's life.

Hervey tells us Harmon Showers and Hambletonian became fast friends and grew to be very dependent upon each other. They often performed tricks for the numerous visitors who came almost daily to see the now famous horse. Many people came from miles away just for a glance at the stallion. James J. Board years later told his grandson, Frank Durland, that "Harm" Showers often drove Hambletonian up and down the flat in Chester, usually in the morning and again towards evening. [5] The horse continued to be shown

year after year at the Orange County Fair in Goshen, much to the delight of the spectators. Rysdyk generally exhibited him before a cheering throng, harnessed to a skeleton wagon.

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[1]Wallace, John H., *The Horse of America* (New York: John H. Wallace, 1897), pp.271-272.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Wallace, John H., *The Horse of America*(New York: John H. Wallace, 1897), pp. 271-272.
[4]*The Horse Review* October 12,1921,p. 1086.
[5] Frank Durland, Letter, *Horse Review* (7 January 1931),p.6.

Challengers on the Horizon

As Hambletonian's star was rising, in the mid-1850's, a son from his first crop of 1852 out of Katy Darling was beginning his stud career. Much to Rysdyk's disdain, Major Edsall, the horse's owner and proprietor of a Goshen hotel, was calling his stallion Edsall's Hambletonian. [1] Rysdyk felt that Edsall was taking opportunities away from his horse. Edsall's Hambletonian stood for a price of $25, and Hambletonian was now commanding a $35 fee. The slight difference in price was apparently enough to cause some breeders to switch over to the younger horse. Their rivalry smoldered for a number of years and reached a boil when Edsall's Hambletonian was driven an exhibition mile of 2:47 in road condition on the half-mile track at the Middletown Fair in the fall of 1858.

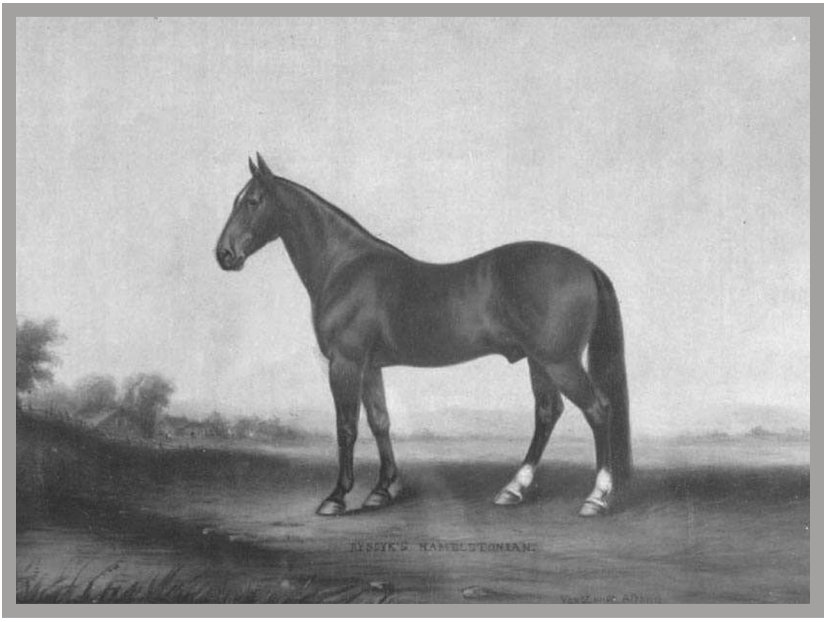
Rysdyk is said to have seldom spoken kindly of the younger horse, however, there must have been occasions, no matter how infrequent, that even he had to admit that the son of Hambletonian was a good-gaited, well-made stallion. Deep down, how could he have felt otherwise? Edsall's horse was a prime example of what Rysdyk had always stated that Hambletonian was capable of siring.

For reasons not quite clear, Edsall and Rysdyk were coaxed into showing their stallions hooked as a team to pole later on at the same Middletown fair, although Rysdyk agreed only after assurances that he would drive the pair. After a warm up session, Rysdyk took the team to the top of the stretch and turned them. The descendants of Messenger, father and son, came toward the grandstand in elegant form and fine style, for they were about as closely matched in size and color as one could hope to get.

The account of what happened next is passed on by John Hervey from information he received in a letter written by Major Edsall long after the incident came to pass. As the pair of stallions passed in front of the grandstand, according to Major Edsall, Rysdyk suddenly snatched at the younger horse's head, then hit him with his whip. Taken by surprise, Edsall's Hambletonian jumped into a wild run, while his sire trotted steadily on into the turn. Major Edsall did not indicate what transpired later between Rysdyk and himself when he went to unharness his horse, but he clearly suspected treachery. No other version of this story was apparently ever recorded, so we do not know what Rysdyk's explanation of the incident might have been. However, it does seem that Edsall's account may have been a bit oversimplified, for it is quite a complex process to hitch and rein a team correctly.

In this particular case, the team may simply not have been harnessed properly. Possibly Edsall's Hambletonian simply reacted contrary to Rysdyk's dictates out of discomfort, thus bringing about the described incident. Then again, the younger horse may have simply decided to get rank while being hitched with another stallion, his actions prompting Rysdyk to strike him.

In his defense, Rysdyk would have been taking a great risk in jerking the younger horse's head to one side. The result would have been to also snatch Hambletonian's head, possibly causing him to break as well, something Rysdyk would have been loathe to have the public see. That kind of cheap trick might also have caused a run away or an accident which could just as easily have crippled Hambletonian as it might have injured his son. What caused the whip to be applied to Edsall's Hambletonian will never



Hambletonian, oil on canvas by Thomas Kirby Van Zandt (1814-1886), 1877.Courtesy of the Harness Racing Museum.

Alexander's Abdallah, oil on canvas by Edward Troye (1808 - 1874), 1864. Courtesy of the Harness Racing Museum.

be known for sure, since all of the parties involved have passed from this world. Just the same, there is a certain amount of justification for Major Edsall to suspect foul play, for most of the local populace was well aware of Rysdyk's prejudice against the younger horse. The rivalry between the two horses ended abruptly when Edsall's Hambletonian was sold and taken to far off Kentucky in 1859. His name was changed by his new owner, and he became famous as Alexander's Abdallah.

It appeared that the field was wide open for Hambletonian with his rival's departure. However, the monopoly was short lived. Another of the stallion's sons had made a name for himself on the race track in New York City, taking a wagon trial mark as a four year old of 2:33 and repeat in 2:31¼ over the Union Course on Long Island. To make matters more annoying to Rysdyk, when he was brought back to Orange County by Alden Goldsmith, he was known as Hambletonian Jr. This fact alone was enough for the Dutchman to bitterly denounce him and prompted Rysdyk to put the knock on the younger horse's dam, Lady Patriot. At one time, Rysdyk had owned and bred from her a full-sister to Hambletonian Jr. named Heroine, later to become a great broodmare. Lady Patriot's sire, Young Patriot, was also the sire of the colt the Charles Kent Mare was carrying when Rysdyk purchased her and Hambletonian. The name Hambletonian Jr. was changed to Volunteer in 1863, undoubtedly patriotically influenced by the Civil War, which was raging at the time.

John Hervey documents Rysdyk's feeling on the matter, quoting a written statement by Rysdyk concerning Volunteer's dam, Lady Patriot. "You are surprised to hear me call the dam of Volunteer a dunghill. I bought her for a

dunghill and I sold her for a dunghill, and I know she is a dunghill; and the most worthless piece of horseflesh that I ever owned." [2] Alden Goldsmith replied by making a statement of his own in print: "These vulgar words will stand as a reproach against the man who has unjustly used them among gentlemen until time shall cease to be." [3] It is plain to see that back then, men took their horses seriously.

Why Rysdyk would spend his time engaging in such activities is unimaginable; evidently it was a part of his nature. Goldsmith seemed to hold no grudge against Hambletonian, for he remained one of his most ardent boosters. In hindsight, we know that Goldsmith's opinion was much more correct than Rysdyk's. One of Volunteer's sons, former world champion trotter St. Julien, with a mark of 2:11¼, is proof of that.

April 1, 1865 the Rysdyks purchased the Tully farm from Charles B. Seely for $21,048 and had William A. Vail, a prominent Chester builder, construct a new home for them on the spot where it still stands, at the corner of Route 94 and Hambletonian Avenue. These transactions were made possible by an increase in Hambletonian's stud fee from $25 in 1852 to $300 in 1865 and Guy Miller's purchase of the Townsend farm from his former employer.

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[1] Edsall's Hambletonian was later sold and renamed Alexander's Abdallah, the name for which he is best remembered. It was not an uncommon practice to rename horses when their ownership changed. This practice continued as late as the 1960s.
[2] John Hervey, *The American Trotter* (New York: Coward-McCann, 1947), pp. 99-100.
[3] Ibid.

Volunteer driven by Alden Goldsmith over Goshen, New York half-mile track. Lithograph by H.C. Eno, art by Charles S. Humphrey 91818–1880). Courtesy of the Harness Racing Museum.

The Star Continues to Rise

As James C. Harrison so aptly pointed out in his work in the *Care and Training of the Trotter and Pacer*, the stars of the 1850's were non-Hambletonians; however, that all changed in the late 1860's. After Volunteer, a number of premiere performers began to emerge, first George Wilkes 2:22, at the time known as Robert Fillingham; and then the multi-talented gelding, Shark, with a record of 2:27¾ under saddle; 2:30½ in harness and 2:33 to wagon. The brightest star of all, however, was Dexter, whose dam was a half-sister to the aforementioned Shark. The brown gelding became immortally famous, and his trial in 2:17¼ stands as the fastest record for any of Hambletonian's get.

In 1876, a Wallace contributor, known only as Churchill, wrote of a journey made in 1867 or 1868 from New York City to the Orange County Horse Fair at Goshen. At this early fall showing, he observed Hambletonian and a number of his colts being exhibited. "The colts looked to me to very strongly favor Hambletonian, so much so that I am certain no one at all acquainted with the stock needed to be told they were sired by the Champion of Chester... I attribute this, in great measure, to the superior blood of this good horse."[1]

Hambletonian's career was booming, and Rysdyk was beginning to amass a modest fortune from the horse's production of foals. Things had gone so well that Rysdyk was devoting all his attention to the breeding of trotting stock. Too much of it, for over the years the April to August breeding season of massive numbers of mares began to take its toll. The 1867 season had to be stopped after 72 mares, were covered. The stallion was too sick to be placed in

service in 1868 at all, a real tragedy for both Rysdyk and Hambletonian, for the aging son of Abdallah was right at his zenith as the most sought after trotting stallion in America, commanding a $500 fee.

The horse was truly a marvel, and his illness, reportedly due to excessive use, was loudly condemned when the happenings of 1868 became widely known. William Rysdyk's quest to get out of his humdrum farming existence and rise to prosperous heights had now taken its toll. His most prized companion and possession had become absolutely useless for an entire year. In a prime example of how good intentions can get out of hand, Rysdyk had caused Hambletonian to cover an average of over 108 mares per year for 16 straight seasons, all by natural means.

In response to the criticism, it must be pointed out that Rysdyk was a loyal individual; one who could not say no to those who had supported his horse when their mares were needed to bring Hambletonian into prominence. After Hambletonian had reached the top, how could Rysdyk turn away the mares of those breeders who had helped place him in that position? Certainly the money was of importance, but the ability to screen out mares not worthy of Hambletonian's services was not within Rysdyk. While we hear of complaints about Rysdyk's greed and excessive use of Hambletonian, we never hear of patrons being cheated or disappointed by their treatment at the Chester breeding establishment.

Since Hambletonian performed his duties as asked, Rysdyk honestly did not know when the expectations for the horse had been exceeded. In truth, no one could actually say that the use of Hambletonian was excessive, because as much had never been requested of a horse before. Never had

so many breeders ever applied to breed to the same stallion. Popularity such as this was unheard of prior to Hambletonian. He was the yardstick that others utilized afterwards to decide what was reasonable and what was excessive use of a breeding stallion. Rysdyk did not have that guiding light. His horse and his operation were the first of their kind. He had to make up the rules as he went along. Many of his decisions turned out to be incorrect, but he always strived to achieve success. It was easy for others to criticize Rysdyk after the fact, but no one else of the time was managing such a large operation.

As testimony of his resiliency, Hambletonian had recovered sufficiently enough to handle 22 mares in 1869, of which 18 got in foal. In 1870, William Rysdyk's health began to fail. Sensing that his life was nearing its end, he had a will drawn up on March 26 of that year. His final testament left the Tully farm to his son, William, and required that William pay his sister, Elizabeth Roe, $3,000 in addition to her receiving the Nehemiah Benton farm. A home and lot were given to his nephew, George F. Andrews. His wife, Elvira retained the rest of the estate, including Hambletonian. Detailed instructions describing how the old stallion was to be buried when he passed away were also left.

In 1870 Hambletonian again covered 22 mares, getting 16 of them in foal, signaling that he was fully recovered from his ordeal. From 1871 on, his book was limited to 30 mares a year, although John Hervey says that each season over 100 applied for admittance to his harem.

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[1] *Wallace's Monthly* (May 1876), Vol. I, p. 691.

Widow McChree and Hambletonianon the Chester, New York farm of William Rysdyk. Lithograph by Currier & Ives, art by John Cameron, 1867. Courtesy of the Harness Racing Museum.

The End Draws Near

William Rysdyk's health continued to worsen, finally resulting in his death on the 23rd of April, 1870 at his Chester home. He was laid to rest in the Community Cemetery located on the Seely Ward farm in the Town of Goshen, near the Town of Chester line. His widow continued to live in their home and his nephew, George F. Andrews, took over the management of the old stallion for the William M. Rysdyk Estate. From the 30 mares bred in each of the years 1871, 1872, and 1873, a total of 70 foals resulted.

During the winter of 1873-74, Hambletonian contracted a respiratory infection which was making the rounds at the time. Many horses died as a result, and those who lived often suffered from ill effects for years. Frank Durland wrote in his letter to the *Horse Review* that Hambletonian became quite hollow backed in later years, probably due in part to the ravages of the disease.[1] Guy Miller noted, "His splendid fore hooves had been ruined by an operation whereby the arch was lost and the old horse, during the remainder of his days stood on his frogs."[2] From Miller's description, Hambletonian was apparently foundered, necessitating the operation in an attempt to relieve his condition.

Hambletonian was bred to a full book of 30 mares in 1874 and got a respectable 22 of them in foal in what proved to be his last complete season. In 1875 he was able to settle only two of five mares covered as a result of fluctuating health.

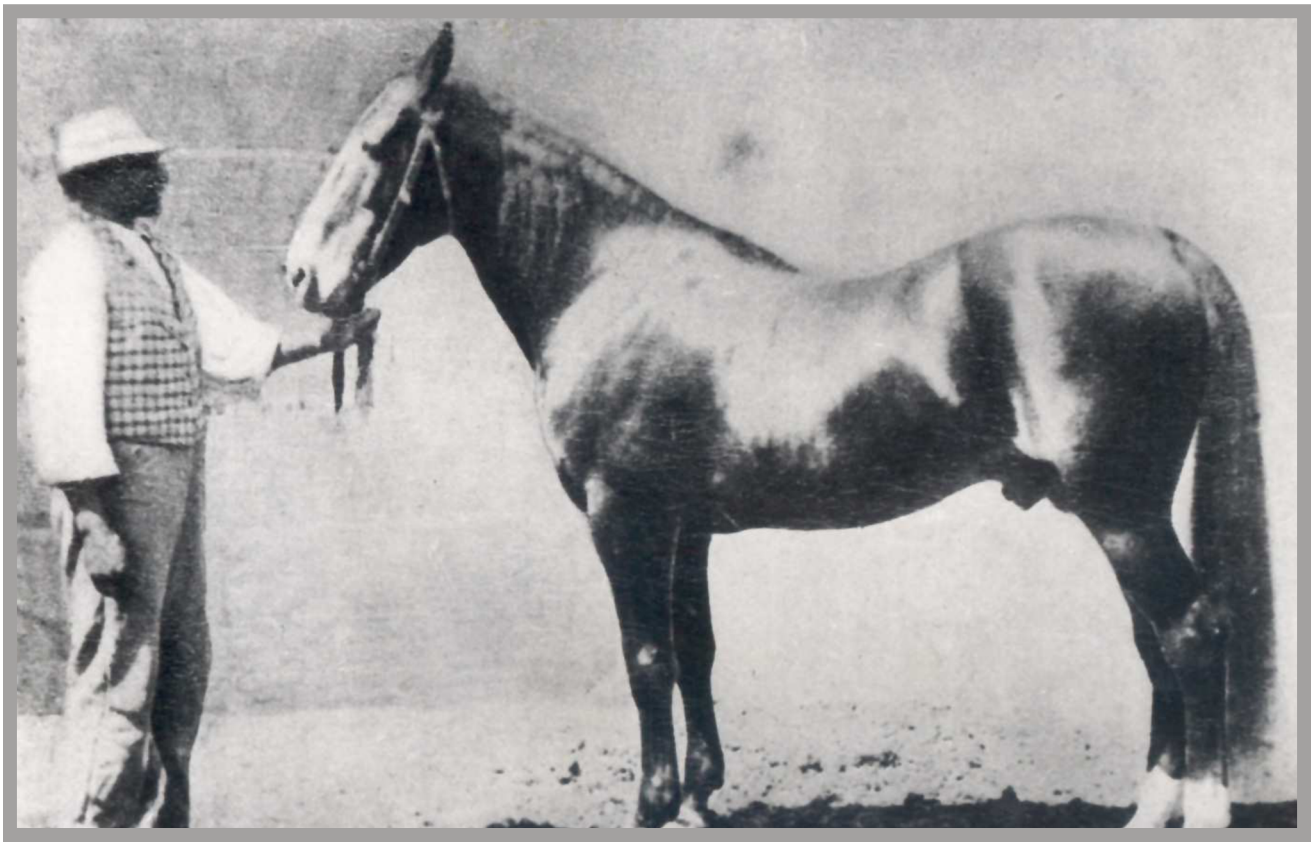
Wallace's Monthly began operation in October of that year and as might be expected, the "Old Hero" of Chester

William Rysdyk and Hambletonian on Rysdyk's Chester, New York farm. Lithograph by H.C. Eno, 1865. Courtesy of the Harness Racing Museum.

was a constant topic in the following months. The articles ranged from deploring excessive stud service to the inheritance of speed from the parents, and the benefits of developing the speed capabilities of a prospective stallion. Only William Rysdyk had ever owned a horse of Hambletonian's merit; however, that didn't stop many others from voicing an opinion about how they could have managed the horse better.

Overcome by illness and age, Hambletonian's long life of productive service ended on March 27, 1876. John Hervey reported that a rain soaked Harmon Showers made the discovery when he arrived in the early morning to feed the great sire, as he had done everyday for nearly twenty years. The old horse was lying on his side, apparently not having been dead very long. After relaying the sad news, Showers immediately began to comply with William Rysdyk's instructions. He placed a new stable blanket on Hambletonian and left his shoes in place as ordered. Following that task, he drew the horse's limbs up to his body and strapped them securely.

Hervey states that all requests for post mortem were refused and an offer to mount Hambletonian's skeleton for exhibition in a museum was also turned down. Hambletonian was placed in a specially constructed box, as Rysdyk had wished. According to Frank Durland, the coffin was made by William A. Vail, the same man who had built the Rysdyks' home. The large box was formed out of heavy planed and grooved white pine boards. The old horse was interred in a gravesite a short distance from the Rysdyk residence, only a few feet back from the present street, now named Hambletonian Avenue. Durland was among those present at the burial; he described the day as very cold and



Hambletonian at 17 years old with groom Harmon Showers in rare photograph by Schreiber & Sons, 1866. Courtesy of the Harness Racing Museum.

rainy. A simple marker was placed over the grave and a wooden fence was constructed around the plot.

The site overlooks a marshy valley through which the Erie Railroad passed. It was through the efforts of one of the frequent travelers of the line, Charles Backman of Stony Ford Farm, that the $3,000 needed to complete the monument to Hambletonian was raised. Backman always wanted to be reminded of his favorite stallion when he passed through the valley. The edifice which marks the gravesite was contributed by the National Association of Trotting Horse Breeders. The twenty-six foot red Ozark Mountain granite shaft, which towers above the monument, was donated and shipped to Chester from Missouri by William Russell Allen of Allen Farm, Pittsfield, Massachusetts. A formal dedication took place in 1893, and an ornamental iron fence was placed around the site.

The foaling spot at the "Hambletonian Farm," in August 1935, was permanently marked by the erection of a granite boulder bearing an inscribed bronze plaque. This was done upon the initiative of the Hambletonian Society.[3] Only a remnant of the last of the trio of giant oaks which shaded the Charles Kent Mare and her newborn foal remained in 1976. By the year 2000, the property had been subdivided, and the birthplace marker relocated to a roadside venue on Hambletonian Avenue, Sugarloaf, NY. Little evidence now remains of the exact spot where the great sire was foaled. To paraphrase John Hervey and Marguerite Henry, these two memorials mark both the first and the final resting places of Hambletonian's personal existence on earth.

However, we all fully realize that his true greatness was not just in himself, but rather in his sons and daughters, that generation after generation, have passed their

inheritance on through their offspring, thus perpetuating the fastest and most enduring strain of trotters and pacers that the world has yet known. Due to the result of this wonderful development, we need not mourn for the "Old Hero".[4] William Rysdyk's dream lives on and is renewed, each spring when a new batch of foals arrives to carry on the Hambletonian legacy.

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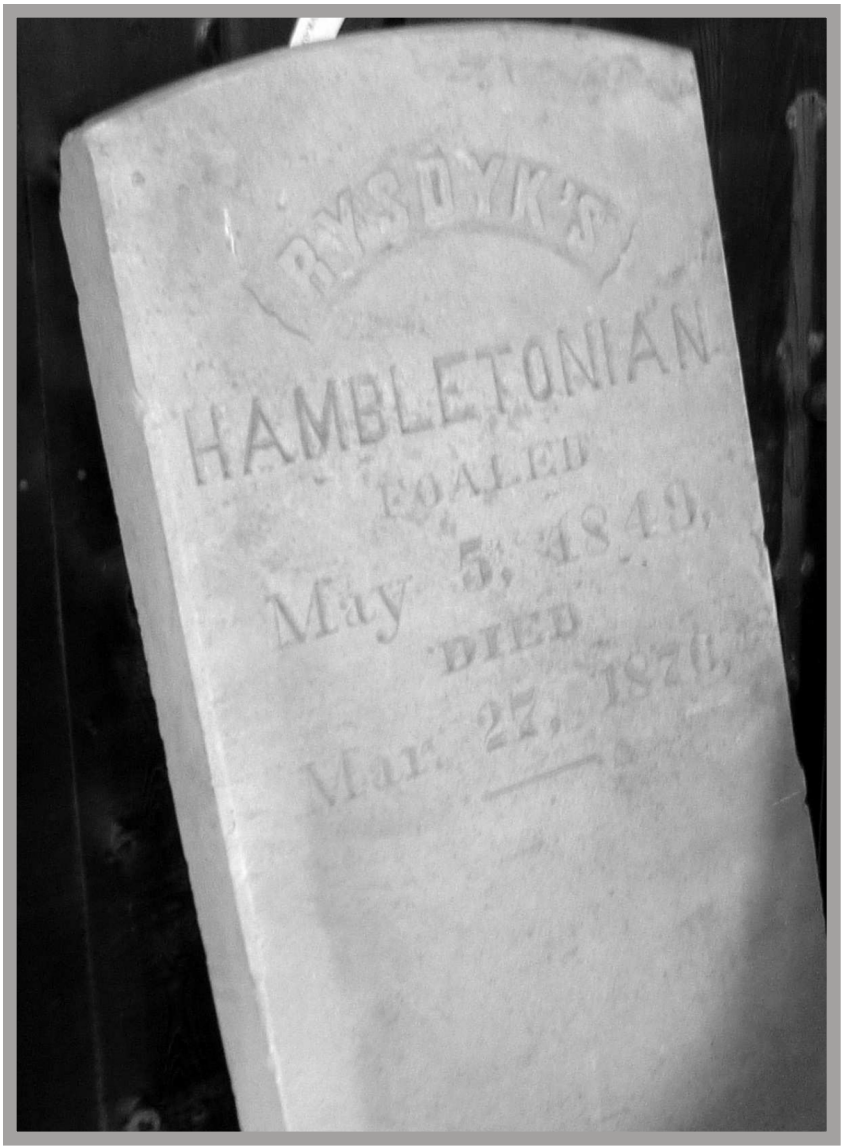
[1]Frank Durland, Letter, *Horse Review* (7 January 1931), p 6.
[2]John H. Wallace, *The Horse of America* (New York: John H. Wallace, 1897), p. 15.
[3] John H. Wallace, *The Horse of America* (New York: John H. Wallace, 1897), p. 15.
[4] Hambletonian was first called the "Old Hero of Chester" by Charles B. Foster in 1862.

HAMBLETONIAN'S BURIAL

CHESTER, N.Y., March 28.—Under the shadow of a black, wooded bluff of the Blue Ridge mountains in this village, the remains of the world-renowned stallion Hambletonian were buried to-day. The body, which had been covered with the blankets and robes and other stable gear that the horse had worn at his death, was enclosed in a pine box, and was borne to the grave on a stoneboat that was dragged; at the heels of horses. Many people from the village of Chester and from neighboring towns had gathered at an early hour this morning, and they formed an escort to the burial place. The grave had been dug in the open orchard at the back of the stable in which the horse had been kept for many years, and under a darkly clouded sky the interment was made. "This is all there is now," *said Mr. Howland* "to mark the grave of the greatest Horse that was ever raised in New York but we shall soon have a stone over the mound, bearing the name, age, and date of death of the horse."

--Excerpt: The Evening Gazette – Port Jervis, N.Y., March 30, 1876



Original headstone from grave of Hambletonian 10. Purchased by Rysdyk's widow Elvira Rysdyk with aid of nephew George Andrews. Donated in later years to Museum Village, Monroe, New York. As seen on display at Museum Village. Courtesy of the Harness Racing Museum.

In1893 a red granite obelisk, funded by horsemen around the country, was raised over the grave of Hambletonian 10 supplanting the much more modest headstone. Courtesy of the Harness Racing Museum.

Appendix I
The Seely Family

In America during the early nineteenth century, the breeding of fast and high caliber road horses was an indiscriminate undertaking. Few breeders made any real organized attempt to produce horses for other than road purposes.

Orange County, New York was a leading center for the development of road horse stock. The land was suited for the production of horses and the ready market provided by New York City was near at hand.

The Seely family of Oxford and later of Sugar Loaf, Town of Chester was among the first group of breeders in the area to assemble classy road mares and to manage stallions of note in an effort to improve the overall level of their stock production. The fact that the Seelys were a close-knit group enabled them to collectively raise the quality of the entire family's road stock.

Jonas Seely, Sr. (1769-1835) was the descendant of English settlers who had come to the new world to seek a more prosperous life for themselves and their families. Known throughout the area, he rose to a respected position as a farmer, cattle dealer, family man, and church member. That mode of living undoubtedly led to his election as the district's representative to the New York State Assembly in Albany, not long after the establishment of our present federal system of government. Jonas Seely, Sr. and his wife, Elizabeth C. Townsend (1772-1824), produced a large family of twelve children, all of whom achieved some degree of success in their own right.

In the early years of the 19th century, Seely, Sr. moved his family to a farm southwest of Sugar Loaf, a tiny Orange

County hamlet. Sugar Loaf, as described by Marguerite Henry in *Born to Trot*, was then, as now, a peaceful cluster of houses and shops nestled on either side of a stretch of road known as the King's Highway. Sugar Loaf derives its name from the mountain that maintains a silent vigil from just east of the settlement.

Eldest son, Townsend Seely (1794-1877), became a doctor. Younger son, Peter Townsend Seely (1807-1861), left the state for budding Chicago, lured there by his uncle, Isaac Townsend. He became one of the first livestock dealers in that once famous meat processing metropolis. The remaining children, in one way or another, each made their livelihoods in the blue limestone, eastern foothills of the Catskill Mountains. The Seely youngsters, each in turn, attended the academy of William Bross in Chester and grew up under the spell that the equine held over the entire countryside. Orange County then resembled the rural settings of Sleepy Hollow and Rip Van Winkle's Greensburg, as described by Washington Irving in his famous short stories. Much of the flavor of that bygone era remains today.

Jonas Seely, Jr. was born on the family holdings near Oxford, Town of Chester, Orange County, New York on December 12, 1797. His childhood seems to have been somewhat privileged, and his development was accordingly proper. On June 15, 1820, he married Temperance Ann Brown (1801-1876). Incomplete records reveal that a daughter, Caroline, married Colonel F. M. Cummings (or Cummins). The Colonel had dealings with trotting horses and took some with him when he moved his family to Iowa in 1855. A younger daughter, Joanna, died at age four in 1842.

Donald Mellville Barrel informs us that Seely, Jr.

owned several farms and served as a director of the Chester National Bank and several other organizations. Acclaimed as a livestock breeder, Seely, Jr. diligently worked the Sugar Loaf farm, which had been passed to him by his father, Jonas Seely, Sr. Jonas Seely, Jr. died June 1, 1882 at his farm where he is buried.

Appropriately, the road horse played a major role in most of Jonas Seely, Sr's family's endeavors, as it did for so many others of that time. Jonas's son, Charles Seely (1800-1852), was a Chester farmer and stallioneer, who at one time, owned Old One Eye, whose daughter, the Charles Kent Mare, was to make the Seely family name immortal as horse breeders. Charles' son, Charles B. Seely who was to eventually sell the old Tully farm to William Rysdyk. Edmund Seely (1795-1866), a Chester resident, owned and stood the famous broodmare stallion, American Star 14. Another son, Ebenezer Seely (1805-1880), also of Chester, owned or managed several stallions, including Abdallah 1 and Orphan Boy. A daughter, Jane (b. 1802), married farmer Josiah Jackson of Oxford, Town of Chester, NY, the eventual breeder of the Charles Kent Mare.

Thaddeus Seely, a cousin, took Jonas Seely, Sr.'s sister as his third wife. He owned and bred classy road horses and at one time, stood a son of Messenger at stud. Peter Townsend, the uncle of Jonas Seely, Sr.'s wife, was a prosperous farmer and the proprietor of the Sterling Iron Works, which made the chain that Washington's army employed to blockade the Hudson River during the Revolutionary War.

The road horse breeders of the early nineteenth century conducted their operations on a small and individual scale, making it a tedious procedure to improve the quality

of the road horse. By interweaving their efforts in a cooperative fashion, not just Jonas Seely, Jr. alone, but the entire Seely family, aided in the creation of Hambletonian, the American Standardbred and the sport of Harness Racing.

HAMBLETONIAN'S PRODUCTION RECORD 1851-1875

Combined figure sources: John Hervey, Samuel Parlin and the Harness Racing Museum & Hall of Fame.

Year	Age	Fee	Mares Covered	Foals	Percentage
1851	2	Free	4	3	.750
1852	3	$25	17	13	.765
1853	4	$25	101	78	.772
1854	5	$35	88	62	.705
1855	6	$35	89	64	.719
1856	7	$35	87	64	.736
1857	8	$35	87	63	.724
1858	9	$35	72	54	.750
1859	10	$35	95	66	.695
1860	11	$35	106	72	.679
1861	12	$35	98	68	.694
1862	13	$35	158	111	.703
1863	14	$75	150	92	.613
1864	15	$100	217	148	.682
1865	16	$300	193	128	.663
1866	17	$500	105	75	.714
1867	18	$500	72	42	.583
1868	19		*Not in Service due to Illness*		
1869	20	$500	22	18	.818
1870	21	$500	22	16	.727
1871	22	$500	30	26	.867
1872	23	$500	30	24	.800
1873	24	$500	30	20	.667
1874	25	$500	30	22	.733
1875	26	$500	5	2	.400

Total: Years in Service: 24 — Mares covered: 1908
Foals: 1331 — Percentage: .698
Colts: 706 — Fillies: 625

Standard Record Sires (2:30 for Trotters) that are sons Hambletonian

Abdallah 15
Aberdeen 27
Administrator 357
Ajax 40
Aladdin 2235
Alert 737
Artemas 1793
Arthurton 365
Artillery 750
Auditor 773
August Belmont 366
Banker 4144
Banker Messenger 496
Barkis 11387
Bay Billy 1767
Bay Richmond 1768
Billy Denton 65
Bismuth 377
Blackstone 72
Blue Grass 382
Bona Fide 720
Broken Leg 9667
Brougham 800
Buckingham 82
Charles Backman 2536
Chester Chief 2172
Chosroes 735
Compeer 492
Corsair 7558
Cuyler 100
Daniel Boone 1756
Dauntless 3158
Dean Sage 1000
Deceive 17552
Deucalion 889
Dexter Bradford 112
Dictator 113
Director 26327
Duke of Brunswick 14256
Dunbarton 121
Echo 462
Edward Everett 81
Egbert 1136
Electioneer 125
Enfield 128
Florida 482
Garabaldi 529
George Wilkes 519
Gideon 145
Goodwin Hambletonian 864
Hamblehawk 508
Hambletonian (Black's) 506
Hambletonian (Curtis') 539
Hambletonian Gem 5949
Hambletonian (Green's) 158
Hambletonian (Felter's) 867
Hambletonian Prince 819
Hambletonian (Sackett's) 1727
Hambletonian(Sherman's)5864
Hambletonian's Last 6403
Hamilton 542
Hampton 19858
Harold 413
Happy Medium 400
Harvester 3648
Haw Patch 1140
Hiram Woodruff 827
Hotspur 172
Idol 44
Imperial 10133
Independent 179
Iron Duke 181
Jack Sheppard 183
Kensett 961
Kent 5560
Jay Gould 197
Kisbar 1273
King William 574
Knickerbocker 200

King William 574
Knickerbocker 200
LakelandAbdallah 351
Lancewood 446
Leland 1300
Logan 127
Lysander 208
Macedonian 523
Mapes Horse 2063
Marlborough 6293
Masterlode 595
Mazeppa 15261
Menelaus 226
Mercury 847
Meredith 1368
Messenger Duroc 106
Middletown 152
Milwaukee 603
Mohican 608
Montagu 877
New York 524
Norwood 522
Oak Hill 2118
Orange County 2992
Orion 3341
Paladin 4853
Peacemaker 260
Peter ---
Peter Story 4300
Pickering 3094
Polonius 4090
Prosper 907
Regulus 264
Reporter 908
Reserve 265
Richwood 5323
Ridgewood 913
Socrates 287
Speculation 928
Squire Talmadge 668
Star Hambletonian 4427
Startle 290
Stephen A. Douglas 422
Strathmore 408
Sweepstakes 298
Trojan Boy 19219
Twilight 315
Ulster Chief 18011
Ridgewood II10358
Robert Bonner 270
Robert Smith 525
Romulus 271
Rysdyk 653
Ryse Duke (Rysduke) 654
Samson 276
Schuyler Colfax 2174
Seneca Chief 278
Sentinel 280
Sir Walkill 1547
Ultimus ---
Victor Bismarck 326
Virgo Hambletonian 3300
Volunteer 55
Walkill 2801
Walkill Chief 330
Walkill Prince 2797
Waltham 687
Wilkins's Micawber 339
William M. Rysdyk 5703
William Rysdyk 527
William Welch 341
Willie Schepper 17359

Total: 150

HAMBLETONIAN'S PRODUCING DAUGHTERS

John Wallace credits Hambletonian with 83 mares that produced at least one standard record performer (2:30 for trotters). To appear in the Table of Great Broodmares in *Wallace's Year Book* the following criteria must be achieved: The mare must be the dam of two standard record performers; or one performer and a standard record sire; or one performer and a standard record producing daughter. 45 of Hambletonian's daughters qualified as Great Broodmares:

Adele 7	1867	b	m	Lady Franklin [pedigree not traced]
Alley 1	186?	b	m	Lady Griswold, by Flying Morgan
Alma 7	1872	br	m	Clara, by American Star (14)
America 1	1873	b	m	Fanny Star, by American Star (14)
Ashcat 1	1857	b	m	Black Maria, by BlackHawk (24)
Bay Hambletonian 1	1869*	b	m	dam by Golddust (150)
Beatrice 3	1873	b	m	Lucy Talmadge, by American Star (14)
Belle Brandon 1	1857	gr	m	Jenny, by Young Bacchus
Belle of Richmond 1	1861	gr	m	Belle of Richmond, by Norman (1777)
Boadicea 2	1873	b	m	Agnes Ethel, by Magnolia (68)
Brunheilde (or Lady Wilmerding) 3	1873	b	m	Dolly Mills, by American Star (14)
Camille	1873	b	m	Emma Mills, by American Star (14)
Caro Nomo1	1865	b	m	Belle of Bristol, by Doble's Black Bashaw
Ella Madden3	1868	b	m	Lady Vail, by Hambletonian

(Drew's)				
Factory Girl 5	1861	b	m	dam by Bolivar (Green's)
Fleetwing 1	1868	b	m	Patchen Maid, by George M. Patchen
Gazelle 6	1865	b	m	Hattie Wood, by Harry Clay (45)
Harvest Queen 2	1863	b	m	dam by American Star (14)
Helen 2	1866	b	m	Hoe Mare, by Rattler
(Rockwell's)				
Heroine 1	1859	b	m	Lady Patriot, by Young Patriot
Idabelle 2	1873	b	m	Godfrey Star, by American Start (14)
Juno 1	1868	b	m	Lady Morrison [pedigree not traced]
Katie Clark 3	1874	b	m	Flora Forrest, by Edwin Forrest (49)
Lady Goldsmith 1	1857	b	m	dam by Tom Thumb
(Webber's)				
Lady Hill 2				dam by Harry Clay (45)
Lady Jane 1	1866	gr	m	[pedigree not traced]
Lady Morgan 1	1865	b	m	Fanny, by Exton Eclipse
Lady Woodhull 1	1853	b	m	Lady Cooley, by Young Hickory
Lorette 1	1871	b	m	Lady Walkill, by Cassius M. Clay (18)
Lucia 1	1868	b	m	Trusty, by Marlborough
Merry Lass 2	186?	b	m	Pug, by Abdallah
(Voorhee's)				
Nell 1				Welling Mare, by Shark
Orange Girl 3	1871	b	m	Dolly Mills, by American Star (14)
Ouida 1	1865	b	m	Morning Glory, by Imp. Consternation

Ozone 1	1874	b	m	Lady Vixen, by Magnolia (68)
Racola 7	1867	br	m	Brown Pacer [pedigree not traced]
Reina Victoria 1	1875	br	m	Hyacinth, by Volunteer
Rose Terry 3	1866	b	m	dam by Black Hawk (5)
Rysdyk Maid 2	1856	b	m	Lady Van Buren, by Bullrush
Rysdyk Maid 8	1872	b	m	Flora, by Benedict's Pathfinder
Sadie 2	1874	b	m	Lady Wynne, by William Welch (351)
Scotland Maid 4	1866	b	m	Trusty, by Marlborough
Ulster Queen 1	1867	br	m	dam by Thomas Jefferson
Vara 1	1867	b	m	Venus, by American Star (14)
Wild Rose 1	1861	b	m	Gipsey [pedigree not traced]

Note:* Wallace lists Bay Hambletonian's year of foaling as 1869 which is very unlikely as Hambletonian was ill for the 1868 breeding season.

Information taken from:

1 Volume VIII, part II of *Wallace's Year Book* published in 1893.
2 Volume IX of *Wallace's Year Book* published in 1894.
3 Volume X of *Wallace's Year Book* published in 1895.
4 Volume XI of *Wallace's Year Book* published in 1896.
5 Volume XII of *Wallace'sYearBook* published in 1897.
6 Volume XIII of *Wallace's Year Book* published in 1898.
7 Volume XIV of *Wallace's Year Book* published in 1899.
8 Volume XVII of *Wallace's Year Book* published in 1901.

HAMBLETONIAN'S 2:30 TROTTERS

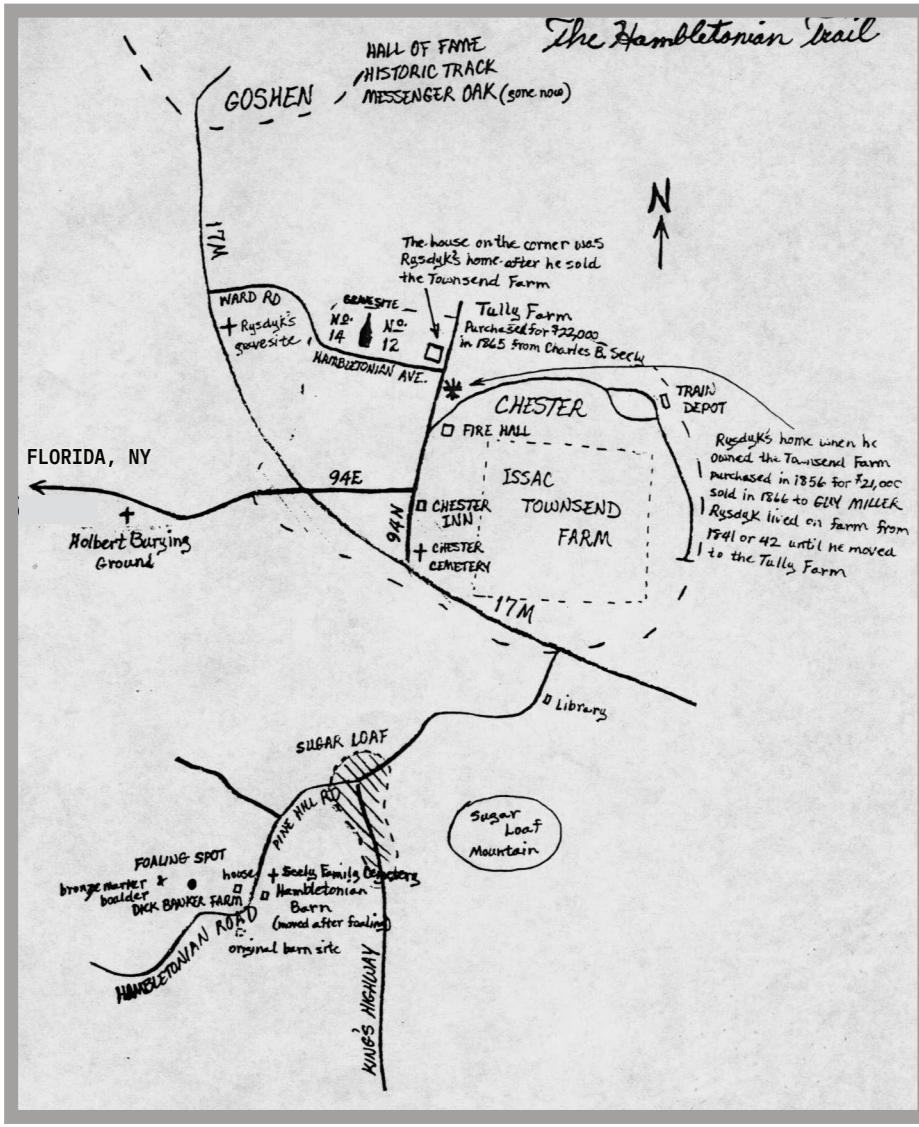
(40 Horses by Time)

Dexter	1858	br	g	2:17¼	Clara, by American Star (14)*
Nettie	1866	b	m	2:18	The County House Mare, by American Star (14)
Orange Girl	1871	b	m	2:20	Dolly Mills, by American Star (14)
Jay Gould	1864	b	h	2:21½	Lady Stanford, by American Star (14)
Gazelle	1865	b	m	2:21	Hattie Wood, by Harry Clay (45)
Artillery	1873	b	h	2:21½	Well's Star, by American Star (14)
Bella	1867	b	m	2:22	Lady McMann, by Jupiter (46)
Deucalion	1867	b	h	2:22	Trusty, by Marlborough
George Wilkes	1856	br	h	2:22	Dolly Spanker, by Henry Clay (8) [unsubstantiated**]
Mattie	1867	b	m	2:22½	Lucy Almack, by Young Gineer
Young Bruno	1864	br	g	2:22	Kate, by Bellaire
Lady Banker	1865	b	m	2:23	Banker Mare, by Boston
Madeline	1875	b	m	2:23¼	Nancy Whitman, by American Star (14)
Breeze	1867	b	g	2:24	Kate, by Bellaire
James Howell Jr.	1866	br	g	2:24	Jessie Sayre, by Harry Clay (45)

Rysdyk Maid	1872	b	m	2:24¼	Flora, by Benedict's Pathfinder
Hambletonian's Las	1876	br	h	2:25¼	Lady Russell, by American Star (14)
Effie Deans	1866	b	m	2:25½	Molly, by Black Hawk (24)
Ella Madden	1868	br	m	2:25¾	Lady Vail, by Drew's Hambletonian
Small Hopes	1866	br	g	2:26½	[pedigree not traced]
Chester	1866	b	g	2:27	Julia Machree, by American Star (14)
Jerome	1870	b	g	2:27	Fanny Fiske, by Young Almack
Lottery	1863	gr	g	2:27	Jane Murray [pedigree not traced]
Kisbar	1873	b	h	2:27¾	Lady Fallis, by American Star (14)
Lottie	1866	br	m	2:28	Molly, by Black Hawk(24)
Scotland Maid	1866	b	m	2:28½	Trusty, by Marlborough
Alma	1872	br	m	2:28¾	Clara, by American Star (14)
Enfield	1868	b	h	2:29	Julia Machree, by American Star (14)
Marguerite	1868	b	m	2:29	Kate Smith [pedigree not traced]

Factory Girl	1861	b	m	2:29¼	dam by Green's Bolivar
Administrator	1863	br	h	2:29½	Dolly Halstead, by Mambrino Chief (11)
Astoria	1870	br	m	2:29½	Clara, by American Star (14)
Bruno	1861	br	g	2:29½	Kate, by Bellaire
Hamperion	1867	b	h	2:29½	Fanny [pedigree not traced]
Harvest Queen	1863	b	m	2:29½	dam by American Star (14)
Drift	1859	br	g	2:29¾	Jenny Nutwood, by Sultan
Maud	1866	b	m	2:29¾	Starlight, by American Star (14)
Sentinel	1863	b	h	2:29¾	Lady Patriot, by Young Patriot
Lady Augusta	1857	b	m	2:30	[pedigree not traced]
Pickering	1872	b	h	2:30	Lady Fallis, by American Star (14)

* Numbers in parentheses are designations made by John Wallace to identify specific stallions as several stallions might have the same name in the same time period.
** Wallace states that Henry Clay was Dolly Spanker's sire. Other sources are not so certain. - Information taken from Volume VIII, part 2 of *Wallace's Year Book* published in 1893.



Map of important locations in the history of William Rysdyk and Hambletonian 10. Drafted by Archie Manina.

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----. *Wallace's Monthly* (May 1876): pp. 714, 749 and 750. [Silvertail: pp. 760-761].
---. *Wallace's Monthly* (January 1877): p. *727.*
---. *Wallace's Monthly* (February 1877): p. 54.
---. *Wallace's Monthly* (January 1878): p. 1085 [The Charles Kent Mare].
---. *Wallace's Monthly* (April 1878): pp. 196, 198-199, 215, 220-221, 232 and 236.
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"Out of all the changes that time has brought, so vast, so far-reaching and so almost incredible, the one great survival from the outworn past which still remains, towering higher and higher as the years and decades pass, is Hambletonian and his influence. The farther he recedes from us, the more colossal he appears. With every fresh advance we make, we find that his blood has carried us there."

~ John Hervey

The American Trotter